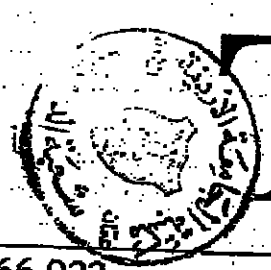


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Handwritten note: "سید زین العابدین"



THE TIMES

35P

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Exchange of toasts is cancelled India snubs the Queen in protocol row

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI AND MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE scrambled yesterday to play down an apparent snub by the Indian Government when it forced the Queen to cancel, at short notice, a speech at a banquet in Madras.

The Palace insisted that the Queen had not been insulted and blamed a misunderstanding for a "minor mistake" in protocol. But the unprecedented ban, during an already accident-prone state visit, plunged Anglo-Indian relations to their lowest level for years.

India is already annoyed about Robin Cook's private remarks about Kashmir; the Queen has been accused of making a political speech on the subject, and local press coverage of the royal tour has been hostile. Now the Government is anxious that inflamed feelings in India could damage the Commonwealth summit later this month.

The row yesterday concerned remarks the Queen had expected to make in reply to toasts proposed by the Governor of Tamil Nadu state at a banquet in Madras. Indian officials insisted that they had made clear during preparations for the visit that there should be only one speech — during state banquet in Delhi hosted by the President — and that it would be a breach of Indian protocol for the Queen to speak in Madras.

But the British High Commission in Delhi said that the Palace had been informed only this week that there would be no exchange of toasts in Madras. "There appears to have been a slight misunderstanding. The main speech



The Queen in Delhi: no insult, says Palace

which the Queen was to make at the President's banquet in Delhi. If the Indian preference is for no exchange of toasts in Madras, that poses absolutely no problem for us."

Buckingham Palace also issued a statement saying: "We are not offended, nor do we feel snubbed." The Palace added that state officials in Tamil Nadu had said in July that they would like the Queen to make a speech but the federal Government had said there was no need. "It is a matter for the Indian federal and state officials. There is no question of a snub. The welcome has been warm and friendly."

A senior Indian External Affairs official, however, insisted that the muddle was the result of a mistake by Palace officials. He said the impression had been given by the British side that India had ordered the cancellation of the speech. "There has been deliberate misinformation."

The row left British officials bemused. State visits leave nothing to chance: every aspect of security, protocol, transport and symbolism is examined to ensure that arrangements — made months in advance — are satisfactory. The suggestion that British officials failed to inform the Queen's hosts of her proposed remarks until this week is privately dismissed as ridiculous.

There are no international rules of protocol for state visits: they are conducted according to the wishes and customs of the countries concerned. There is certainly no global tradition that speeches should be limited to state banquets in the capital: the Queen spoke on several occasions in South Africa and Germany. President Chirac and President Mandela spoke more than once in Britain.

The embarrassment comes hard on the heels of Indian annoyance at earlier private remarks on Kashmir by the Foreign Secretary in Pakistan. Indian officials also claimed that the Queen was interfering in an internal matter when, during a speech in Islamabad, she urged India and Pakistan to settle their differences.

Mr Cook, who returned to London yesterday, insisted, however, that relations between Britain and India were stronger than ever. He denied that he had ever suggested publicly that Britain was willing to mediate over Kashmir and emphasised that Inder Kumar Gujral, the Indian Prime Minister, had denied subsequent reports that he had called Britain a "third-rate power."

Mr Cook said: "I made no public statement, gave no press conference, gave no interview and no public comments on the issue of Kashmir. As to the remark of the Indian Prime Minister, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has said that report was without foundation."

The Indian press has been mostly facetious or hostile in its coverage of the royal tour. The Duke of Edinburgh's reported assertion that the number of people killed in the 1919 Amritsar massacre had been exaggerated drew a withering response. "Prime lights another fire," the front-page headline in *The Asian Age* declared, and its main story spoke of the "royal couple's perceived arrogance during their visit to the Golden Temple." Their failure to write any comments in the visitors' book was also noted by most Indian newspapers.

South African visit for Prince Harry

BY EMMA WILKINS

PRINCE HARRY is to accompany the Prince of Wales on his forthcoming official visit to South Africa. St James's Palace confirmed yesterday.

The 13-year-old Prince will attend a fundraising concert and visit a KwaZulu village to meet children at a local school.

Prince Harry will have a schoolfriend, police protection officer and "Tiger" Legge-Bourke, his former nanny, as travelling companions.

While Prince Charles visits Swaziland, the two boys will spend a few days on a mini-safari before returning to Ludgrove School in Berkshire for the second half of the autumn term on November 3.

Prince William, 15, is unable to go because his half term holiday from Eton College ends just as the royal tour starts on Tuesday October 28.

One highlight of the royal programme will be a Spice Girls concert in Johannesburg on November 1 in aid of the Nations Trust, a charity similar to Prince's Trust.

The young Prince will then accompany his father to the village of Pekaia, where he will watch traditional singing and dancing.

It was unclear yesterday whether the Prince would visit his uncle Earl Spencer, who lives in Cape Town. A spokeswoman for Lord Spencer's office said it was unclear whether he would be in South Africa at the time of the visit.

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Stella McCartney, centre, celebrates with her models at the end of her debut show for Chloé at the Opera Garnier in Paris yesterday

Star-spangled turnout for Stella's show

FROM GRACE BRADBERRY, STYLE EDITOR, IN PARIS

STELLA MCCARTNEY revived the hippy-chic house of Chloé yesterday with her debut show for the French fashion label before a front row whose namecards represented a roll call of Sixties luminaries.

Shielded by a wall of security guards, her parents Sir Paul and Linda McCartney, followed by Ringo Starr and his wife Barbara Bach made their way to their seats. The photographer David Bailey and his wife Catherine Dyer were already seated to their left.

A few places along sat the Nineties contingent, including Meg Matthews, the high-profile wife of Noel Gallagher of Oasis, who was joined by Kylie Minogue and the photographer Mario Testino.

After such a show of celebrity force, it scarcely seemed to matter what the clothes were like. When McCartney's



Proud parents: Sir Paul and Linda McCartney said they loved the show

appointment was announced in April, some commentators — including her predecessor Karl Lagerfeld — were sceptical, suggesting that Chloé's president, Mounir Maussarrige, was banking on the commercial pull of her showbusiness name — and certainly wheeling out two ex-Beatles in publicity stunt that is hard to match.

But the 25-year-old designer who

graduated from Central St Martin's just two years ago, had two other huge advantages: she was young and she was from London, assets greatly prized by the fashion industry at the moment. And yesterday she appeared to have pulled it off, presenting a fun, quirky mix of haute bohemia, that paid homage to Chloé's heyday in the late Sixties and Seventies with its lingerie tops and laced corsets.

The collection went down well with her parents — at one point her father could be seen making enthusiastic drumming movements to the music watched by an amused Ringo Starr. Afterwards, they made a rather regal progress backstage protected by the alarming mob of heavies. "I loved it. It was so elegant, so beautiful," Sir Paul said. "I'm so proud," his wife added. "I loved all the blues and pinks. I want to wear the entire collection."

Jobless total falls to 17-year low

The Government yesterday hailed an improving labour market after unemployment fell to a 17-year low and earnings growth remained steady.

The 27,800 September fall in the those out of work and claiming benefit cut the jobless total to 1,467,600, 5.2% of the workforce and the best figures since 1980. But the smaller than expected fall in the seasonally adjusted total led to suggestions that the economy was slowing. Page 25

Thrust breaks sound barrier — official

BY DAVID WATTS

THRUST's team made no mistake last night as they made their supersonic land speed record official.

Royal Air Force pilot Andy Green made two runs across the Black Rock Desert in Nevada that were faster than Mach 1, breaking his record set earlier this month. The record now stands at 762mph.

Two days ago the team broke the sound barrier but their two runs took 61 minutes to complete, cheating them out of a place in history by 60 seconds. International rules stipulate that the car must complete two runs within an hour so that it can be safely deemed that no outside force, including the wind, helped it to reach the speed.

Late last month Thrust SSC set the earlier best at 714mph after two flawless desert runs. The team woke yesterday to perfect conditions. During the first run at 9.07am local time, 5.07pm British time, Richard

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INSTRUMENTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

Woodward shook baby, mother says

The mother of the baby allegedly shaken to death by Louise Woodward told a court in Massachusetts today how the British actress had rung her on the day her son was taken to hospital to tell her how the baby had "choked on vomit" and lost consciousness.

She also described how Miss Woodward said that she shook the boy but only after he had seemed to stop breathing. Page 3

Elton John 'tell-all' memoir could fetch £10m

FROM DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT, IN FRANKFURT

ELTON JOHN has sparked off a bidding war among publishers by deciding to reveal all in his memoirs. An advance of between £8 million and £10 million is rumoured. The musician has always turned down previous offers to write about himself.

At least two major British publishers were last night competing in an auction behind the scenes at the Frankfurt Book Fair, which opened

yesterday. Such are the book's potential sales that millions were being offered for a manuscript that publishers have not even seen. Bidding opened at £4 million just for the world English language rights. "If it's a 'tell-all' book, it will be worth it," one publisher said, "and we'd certainly buy it right unseen. The sales potential is absolutely huge. People who buy only one book in a year will buy this one. It will be huge everywhere."

The only writing to be spotted at the feverish book

bazaar, now into its 49th year, is on cheques and contracts. One publisher at the fair noted that if the Elton John book was bought for £10 million, the strength of his name worldwide — particularly after his appearance at the funeral service of Diana, Princess of Wales — would sell ten million books. Publishers must be sure, however, that the words will be coming. There was a hectic bidding war for a Mick Jagger autobiography that never materialised.

John has turned down all

offers in the past. His literary agent, David Chaffant, of the American company IMG Literary, promised that it would be a candid account, "reflective and introspective". He said: "This is going to be one of the biographies of the decade. It's a memoir rather than an autobiography."

One friend said that somehow, with the loss of his friends the Princess and Gianni Versace, Elton John wanted to contemplate his own life. He will collaborate with Ingrid Sischy, of *Interview*, the American magazine.



John: has turned down all book offers in past

Ministers look to science for safer travel, Arthur Leathley reports

The system would operate through roadside beacons transmitting speed limit information to in-car computers

be discussed more widely. The measure is listed in the document alongside short-term solutions to road accidents, such as further curbs on drink-driving, better training and

Pressure is increasing on local authorities and police forces to put forward effective traffic calming schemes and to provide better protec-

Britain has already achieved a target, originally set for the year 2,000, of reducing road deaths by one

Compared with the 1981-85 average, the number of deaths on the road has fallen by 36 per cent to 3,598 in 1996, while the number of serious casualties has dropped by 40 per cent to 44,473.

Tory officials yesterday insisted that the selection process was a matter entirely for the Beckenham Conservative Constituency Association and refused to comment on whether William Hague would like a senior former minister as a candidate. No date has yet been fixed for the by-election. Last night Sir Malcolm was understood to be considering his future political career but had not made any decision so soon after Mr Merchant's resignation.

A new unit to monitor comments about the Government on television, radio and in newspapers is to be set up before the end of the month. The media monitoring unit will allow Ministers to be briefed on news issues and to react quickly to changing events. If a trial is successful, a Government presentation unit is likely to be set up within the Cabinet Office. Press officers would be assigned to cover the regions to ensure that new policy initiatives are given national publicity.

A Lords committee last night gave the go-ahead for plans to change the ancient ceremony by which new peers are introduced into the House. The Lords Procedure Committee decided to investigate how the 370-year-old pageantry could be streamlined to save time. The move will pave the way for the Government to introduce some new Labour life peers more quickly as part of their planned reforms to the second chamber. The introduction ceremony dates from 1621.

The chairman of the Southall train crash inquiry resigned last night amid allegations that he faced a conflict of interest. Dr Tony Barrett announced his resignation after it emerged that his position as a non-executive director of the airport company BAA could compromise his position at the head of the inquiry. The stretch of line on which the train crashed, killing seven passengers, had recently been upgraded in preparation for the new Heathrow Express rail service.

General Sir Peter de la Billière, commander of British forces during the Gulf War, and Colonel Bob Stewart, former commander of British forces in Bosnia, joined show business celebrities last night at a Downing Street reception hosted by Tony Blair. Less than a year after being banished from all SAS bases for writing a best-selling account of his exploits in the war, Sir Peter joined 150 guests in No 10's *State Rooms*.

BBC viewers are to be asked whether they like the interviewing styles of presenters including Jeremy Paxman and John Humphrys in a survey to strengthen the Corporation's public accountability. The questions will form part of the BBC's new Statement of Promises, published yesterday. They will also be able to nominate which repeat programmes they want to see. The BBC has made 66 new promises and says it kept 221 of 230 made last year.

A Lebanese cargo ship, the 9,500-tonne *O'Shea Express*, anchored in Plymouth Sound last night after its crew mutinied and took control of the vessel. The ship was taken over shortly after leaving Bremerhaven bound for Beirut with a cargo of German cars. The vessel's Polish captain put out a Mayday call after the 11-strong Lebanese crew took over the bridge and refused to leave until they received £60,000 in back pay they claim they were owed.

A lightning inspection of Lincoln Prison uncovered filthy cells, a remand wing that was out of control, and gangs robbing weaker prisoners. Sir David Ramsbotham, the Chief Inspector of Prisons, said: "You begin to wonder in which country, and in what century, what is described is taking place." The inspection was carried out in March a week after a new governor took over. The Prison Service said: "Many of the problems have been tackled."

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

John Redwood has today warned British industry that joining a single currency would cost it at least £10 billion. Writing in *The Times*, the

Sir Bryan Nicholson, former CBI president, said he had heard the GM chief economist's reported view expressed by other businesses "in private".

John Redwood, page 20



**'We thought they were
a terrific family. The
split was a surprise'**

A spokeswoman for Cereal Partners, which makes Shredded Wheat for Nestlé, said news of the couple's separation was a complete surprise. "All of our contact with Glenn and his family was immensely positive," she said. "We

The Hoddles' £350,000 home in Ascot, Berkshire was deserted yesterday. Neighbours said Anne Hoddle had told them she was going away for a few days to escape the fuss. They, and worshippers at the Windsor church where the

John Gorman, England's assistant coach and a friend of Hoddle's for 15 years, was clearly affected by the news. He insisted, however, that the demands of steering the England team to the World Cup finals had not been to blame. "It was not the pressure. Football had nothing to do with it. And there was nobody else involved."

BY ANDREW PIERCE, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Robin Wight, the flamboyant bow-tied chairman of

A former Tory parliamentary candidate, he was one of only a handful of outsiders at the recent strategy session held in the Dorset home of Viscount Cranborne, the Tory leader in the House of Lords.

Senior Tories predicted last night that it was unlikely the Saatchi brothers would work for the party again. However, Lord Saatchi, who has worked on every election campaign since 1979, remains supportive. On Tuesday he had lunch with Lord Parkinson, the party chairman.

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

Tens of millions of pounds have been invested in attempts to genetically engineer pigs so that their organs can be transplanted to humans. Withmur

The new findings are published in the journal *Nature* by scientists from the Institute for Medical Research in Mill Hill, London. The team responsible concluded that because the viruses were so common in a wide range of pigs, "the breeding of virus-free pigs, if at all feasible, will represent a complex task".

Immuntran, the Cambridge company pioneering pig-to-human transplants, said yes-

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Au pair told mother her son had choked

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN
IN NEW YORK

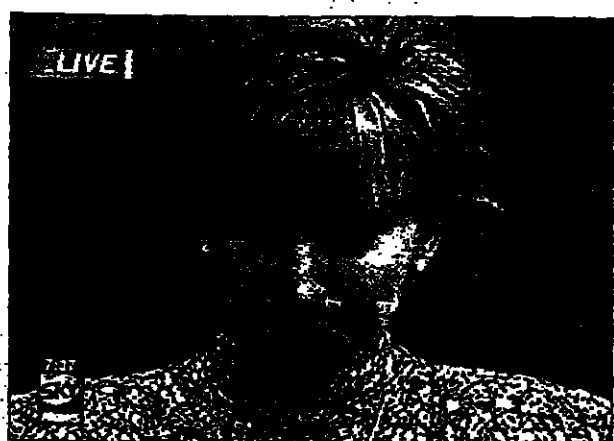
PALE and barely choking back her emotion, Deborah Eappen, the mother of the nine-month-old boy allegedly shaken to death by Louise Woodward, told a tense courtroom yesterday that the British au pair had rung her on the day her son was admitted to hospital to tell her that the baby had "choked on vomit".

She said Miss Woodward described how her son Matthew had lost consciousness, was "breathing strangely" and his eyes were "glazed".

Mrs Eappen also described how Miss Woodward told her that she shook Matthew, but only after he had seemed to stop breathing. She said she saw Matthew later at the hospital and observed that his "eyes were unseeing" after a haemorrhage of the brain.

Earlier, Mrs Eappen told the court in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that Miss Woodward habitually stayed out late at night, frequently disappeared and, on numerous occasions, she left the babies in her care unattended.

Her voice shaking, Mrs Eappen said Matthew was



Deborah Eappen breaking down in court yesterday

"beatty, smiling, babbling, fat, lazy, easy to take care of" in the weeks preceding his admission to hospital on February 5.

Wearing a high-necked, knee-length floral cotton dress, with simple single-pearl earrings, Mrs Eappen recounted the history of the family's relationship with Miss Woodward, from the day in November 1996 when they first interviewed her for the au pair's job, to the time when Matthew was taken to hospital.

The picture she painted of

Miss Woodward was deeply unflattering. Mrs Eappen said: "She was often out late, and got up late in the morning. I was concerned about her energy levels and patience with two young children."

Mrs Eappen said Miss Woodward had always resisted the idea of a curfew. She added: "She once came back at 2.48am. I know the time because she was wearing very heavy boots and made a lot of noise."

Miss Woodward seldom spent time with the family, refusing to attend the Thanks-

giving dinner and dinner on Christmas Eve last year. On New Year's Eve, Mrs Eappen said, Miss Woodward simply disappeared. "Even her mother, who was staying with us, did not know where Louise had gone."

She said that, on January 30, two months after Miss Woodward joined them, the Eappens had summoned Louise for a discussion. She said: "We told her that this was it. She either accepted our guidelines or she left." She accepted them, assuring the Eappens that she would "reform and do better".

Mrs Eappen said she had left home to go to work on February 4, only to be paged to ring Miss Woodward. She said: "Louise said, 'I'm Matthew. I think Matthew has choked on his own vomit.' I said, 'Did you do the abdominal thrusts like we talked about?' She said, 'No, he was breathing funny. He was sounding gurgly.'"

Mrs Eappen asked the au pair if she had dialled the emergency number 911 but she allegedly said that, instead, she had paged Mr Eappen three times at work. "She said that Matthew was crying and didn't want to take the bottle, so she changed his diaper and she put him on his bed with his caterpillar toy and she went back to the bathroom and threw the diaper away, and washed her hands thoroughly and then she went back and his eyes looked glazed over."

She said she could hear on the telephone the paramedics working on her dying son. Mrs Eappen said that at the hospital, where she was joined by her husband, a team of emergency physicians was examining Matthew.

"They had an ophthalmologist looking at his eyes and he said there was blood in his eyes, and I knew what that meant. I just couldn't believe it. I asked if I could have a quick look while they were arranging a CAT scan. The ophthalmologist lent me his equipment. When I looked at Matthew's eyes both pupils didn't react to the light. This is abnormal. And there was a lot of haemorrhaging deep in the retina."

The trial continues.

Thousands watch on Net

BY TUNKU VARADARAJAN

AN INTERNET site dedicated to the case is attracting thousands of "visitors" a day, even drawing the cautious attention of the judge presiding over her trial.

The site, set up in Newton — the suburb of Cambridge, Massachusetts, where Miss Woodward lived with the family of nine-month-old Matthew Eappen — has become such a talking-point in the area that Judge Hiller B. Zobel routinely warns jurors not to consult the Internet when they return home each day.

"May I remind you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury," he says, "that it is prohibited to read about the case in newspapers, to watch television and listen to the radio, and even to discuss the matter with anyone. Furthermore,



Woodward: she gains surprising sympathy

may I stress that the Internet is now a medium of communication, and that you may not draw information from there either."

The Louise Woodward web-site — <http://www.townonline.com/~louisew> — has been set up by The News Tribune

of Newton, the parish newspaper. Readers can find daily reports by Anne Scadding, the paper's court reporter; information on the case's dramatic personnel; "links" to other sites offering expertise on such things as "shaken baby syndrome"; and a section called "Speak Out!", comprising hundreds of opinions sent in by friends of Miss Woodward, friends of the Eappen family and other unconnected observers.

This "cyber-vox pop" is surprisingly sympathetic to Miss Woodward. One contributor said: "A lot of people seem to have jumped to conclusions about Louise Woodward, and quite frankly we have only our press and media to blame. They often give us what they think, we want rather than the kick up the backside we usually need."

Failings by agencies over killing of father

BY SIMON DE BRUCELLES

A 24-YEAR-OLD mentally ill woman beat her father to death after her early release from a secure psychiatric unit. But an inquiry into the killing concluded yesterday that despite shortcomings in the treatment of Sarah Beynon, a 23-year-old office worker, the tragedy could probably not have been avoided.

Beynon, of Clevedon, Somerset, was taken into secure accommodation after she developed paranoid schizophrenia. She had shown signs of violence and heard voices telling her to kill her father.

After an apparent improvement she was allowed home on day release to her family in Portishead. In August 1995 she crept up behind her father Colin, 56, killed him with a mallet and hammer. Last May she was sent to Broadmoor.

A report commissioned by the Avon Health Authority revealed a "lack of communication" between agencies caring for Beynon.

Three years for youth who ran school drugs ring

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A TEENAGE "puppetmaster" ran a ring of schoolboy drug dealers who sold LSD and cannabis at break time. Manchester Crown Court was told. Pupils smuggled the drugs into the 143-year-old Blue Coat Church of England school in Oldham, Greater Manchester, in the linings of their blazers or hidden in the tops of their socks.

Todd Crombie, 18, of Woodhouses, Oldham, one of four facing charges including his brother Ben, 15, was jailed for three years yesterday for being concerned in the supply of LSD and cannabis. He was the only one of the four not a pupil at the school.

The scandal led to seven pupils being expelled from the voluntary-aided school.

Judge Richard Holman told Crombie: "You were the puppetmaster of young pupils who did your dirty work for you. There would have been older and more evil men above you, but they must have been

rubbing their hands with glee as you, acting as sergeant, engaged young and vulnerable minds in this sordid world."

Ben Crombie, of the same address, admitted being concerned in the supply of cannabis and was made subject of a two-year supervision order. John Hollingworth, now 16, also of Woodhouses, was sentenced to 18 months' youth custody for supplying LSD.

David Wrigley, also 16, of New Moston, was made subject of a supervision order for two years for supplying LSD and cannabis. The judge made an order that the boys could be named.

He told them: "A dark shadow hangs like a cloud over Blue Coat School, a good school with an excellent reputation which you have now tarnished by your behaviour."

In the summer the school reached the top 30 in *The Times* list of comprehensives at A-level.

Virgin 'was gang-raped by six boys in car park'

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A 16-YEAR-OLD schoolgirl was gang-raped by six boys who laughed and cheered as they attacked her in a multi-storey car park, the Old Bailey was told yesterday.

The alleged victim, a virgin, had gone to the shopping centre in Wood Green, North London, with a friend. "She had an hour before going to a music lesson — they were killing time," Andrew Brierley, for the prosecution, said. When they came out of a shop, they were approached by a group of boys.

Both girls were forced into the car park above the shops. One boy made "unwanted advances" to the friend, while the girl was taken into a lobby area in the two-hour attack in February. Light bulbs were smashed and she was threatened before the rape. Mr Brierley said.

The six, who cannot be named, deny rape. One also denies indecently assaulting the girl's friend.

Leonardo bike 'was 1960s doodle'

BY NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A SKETCH that for years has convinced some academics that Leonardo da Vinci invented the bicycle was in fact a doodle by an Italian monk in the 1660s, it was claimed yesterday.

The famous drawing of a two-wheeled machine with chain, pedals, seat and handlebars was discovered in 1974 by a researcher at the Catholic University in Milan. It has appeared in books and museum displays with da Vinci's sketches of parachutes and a helicopter, becoming a source of Italian pride.

At the time, it was thought unlikely to be a drawing done directly by the master, but a rough copy by a pupil of an original, since lost, sketch by da Vinci. Now Hans-Erhard Lessing, retired curator of the Museum of Technology and



Renaissance bicycle: sketch that peddled a legend

Labour in Mannheim, believes that two circles on a sheet of genuine da Vinci drawings were sketched into a bicycle in the 1660s when Italian monks were restoring manuscripts.

"No one questioned it — the

Italians were ecstatic to have invented the bicycle," the retired curator and technology enthusiast has told *New Scientist* magazine.

The sketch of the bicycle is on the back of a sheet of da Vinci drawings which had

been folded in half and glued by a 16th-century conservator. Mr Lessing tracked down Carlo Pedretti, an art historian at the University of California at Los Angeles, who in 1961 had examined the folded pages.

He confirmed that he had never seen a bicycle among the sketches. Instead his notebook records seeing two circles. "What I saw was not a bicycle," he told the magazine.

An analysis of the brown crayon could provide conclusive proof, by helping to date the drawing. But the pages have since been sealed in plastic to preserve them.

Despite the controversy, modellers at the Museum of Leonardo da Vinci in Florence have made a full-scale replica of the bicycle based on the sketch. It will be on display in an exhibition to the master's work in New York this month.



Debbie Lalor with daughter Georgina. She has sent a reference to the defence team and says that Miss Woodward was "calm, capable and easy-going"

Louise was great with my girl, says villager

BY RUSSELL JENKINS

A MOTHER who employed Louise Woodward as a babysitter before she left for America has spoken for the first time about the caring teenager who responded to her youngster's overactivity with reserves of patience.

Debbie Lalor, 36, a deputy hotel manager, said she was perfectly happy with the way she cared for her daughter Georgina, now 10, over a two-year period. She described Miss Woodward, 19, as a "calm, capable and easy-going" babysitter, and has written a character reference to be used in her defence.

"The way Louise is coming across in the court case is not the Louise I know," said Mrs Lalor, who has also written to Miss Woodward in jail urging her to maintain a "positive mental attitude". Mrs Lalor has been a friend of the Woodward family for 20 years and lives half-a-mile away on the other side of Elton, in Cheshire. She provided references for Miss Woodward and helped her to apply for a post in the United States.

The schoolgirl, then 13, began babysitting for her when Mrs Lalor took up a part-time job as a barmaid in the Rigger public house. Georgina was then four and known to be a handful. Mrs Lalor said: "She had a good attitude towards children, very capable, and I never had any worries about leaving Georgina with her. She used to bath her, give her some supper and put her to bed while reading her a story."

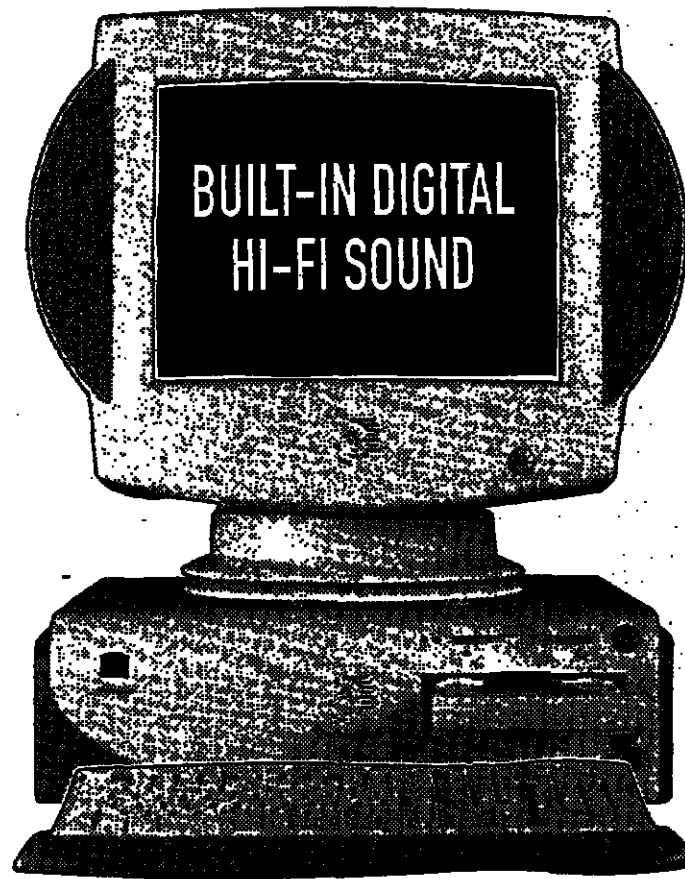
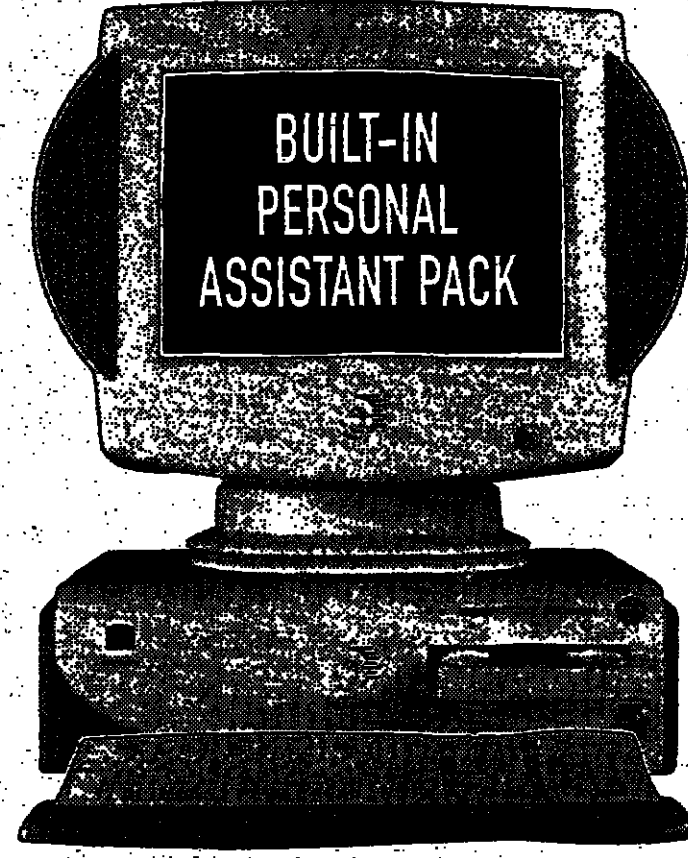
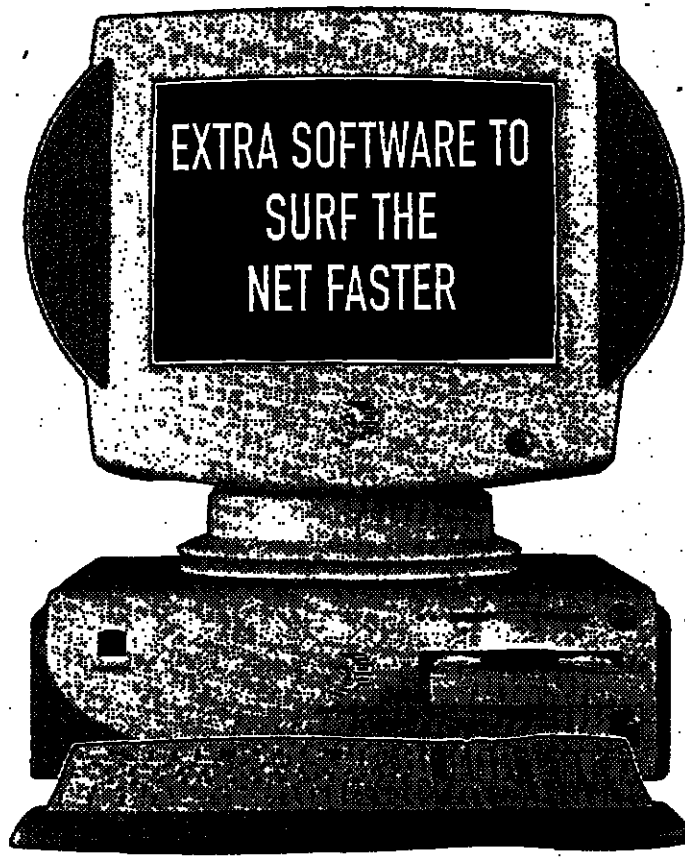
"When Georgina was specially boisterous she would settle her down and was always very patient if she was in that mood. Louise was very child-orientated and would even come round just to see Georgina after school or when she had time in the holidays. Although she was level-headed and calm she always had a sense of humour. She had everything in perspective."

Villagers conducting a prayer vigil for Miss Woodward at the parish of St James, Ince and Elton.

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Schools to lose voice on parents' choice

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

PARENTS are to have the right of appeal to independent panels if their children are rejected by the schools of their choice, it was announced yesterday as new figures showed a sharp rise in challenges under the current system.

The number of appeals against popular schools' decisions on admissions has risen consistently as parents have tried to exercise choices championed by the Conservative government. The 62,856 appeals in 1995-96 represented a 15 per cent rise in a year.

Almost 40 per cent of last year's appeals were successful in securing places against schools' wishes. But Stephen Byers, the School Standards Minister, told headteachers of grant-maintained schools that many parents still felt the involvement of school governors and local authority officials weighted the process against them.

Legislation to be introduced next month will establish independent local panels from which councillors and governors of the school involved in an appeal will be barred. Mr Byers said the new system would have the confidence and support of parents.

The 1980 Education Act gave parents the right to appeal against the school to which their children were assigned. But the biggest increases have come since the introduction of school league tables and the publication of the Parents' Charter.

The number of appeals has almost doubled since the start of the decade, and last month the Local Government Ombudsman reported a 30 per cent increase during 1996 in the number of parents lodging

complaints about the handling of their cases.

About 70 per cent of appeals in 1995-96 submitted by parents were pursued to a committee hearing, according to the Department for Education and Employment. Almost 17,000 cases were decided in favour of the parents, compared with 14,800 in the previous year. Most appeals concerned admission to secondary schools, but the success rate was higher in primary school cases.

Mr Byers said: "This further increase in the number of appeals by parents shows how hollow the claim of the previous government that they were 'extending parental choice' really was."

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, said that confusion over admission procedures might not improve. "This Government must ensure that its promises are kept and are realistic—for example, you cannot guarantee to limit class sizes without some constraint on parental choice."

Last year, the Audit Commission warned of impending "gridlock" over admissions because of conflicting admissions policies and a shortage of places in popular schools. Next month's Bill will give local authorities responsibility for co-ordinating policies in all schools in their area.

Stephen Dorrell, the Shadow Education Secretary, said: "The figure is higher than I feel comfortable with, but it is a challenge to the Government to see that figures fall, not to simply blame it on its predecessors."



Hat in the ring: McQueen's look was half-cowgirl, half-Pocahontas

Stella McCartney puts on the style

FROM GRACE BRADBERRY, STYLE EDITOR, IN PARIS

STELLA McCARTNEY, the 25-year-old daughter of Sir Paul and Linda McCartney, claimed not to have given her parents a preview of her debut show for Chloé in Paris. "I wanted it to be a surprise," she said yesterday.

Nor had she tried to compete with the extravagant, themed collections of her fellow Britons, John Galiano and Alexander McQueen. "There's no theme — it's just a collection that women can feel confident in, with a lot of attention to detail."

As well as her trademark lingerie tops, there were laced corsets over long skirts, wide-legged, tailored trouser suits and a bikini with red heart design sure to be snapped up by exactly the kind of model girls-about-town that the Chloé label is intended to attract.

Tiny little dresses with tassels hanging from the back were reminiscent of Galiano. But though the clothes were not wildly original, they had a distinctive style and they worked.

Alexander McQueen, who showed his second collection for Givenchy yesterday afternoon, shunned the tra-

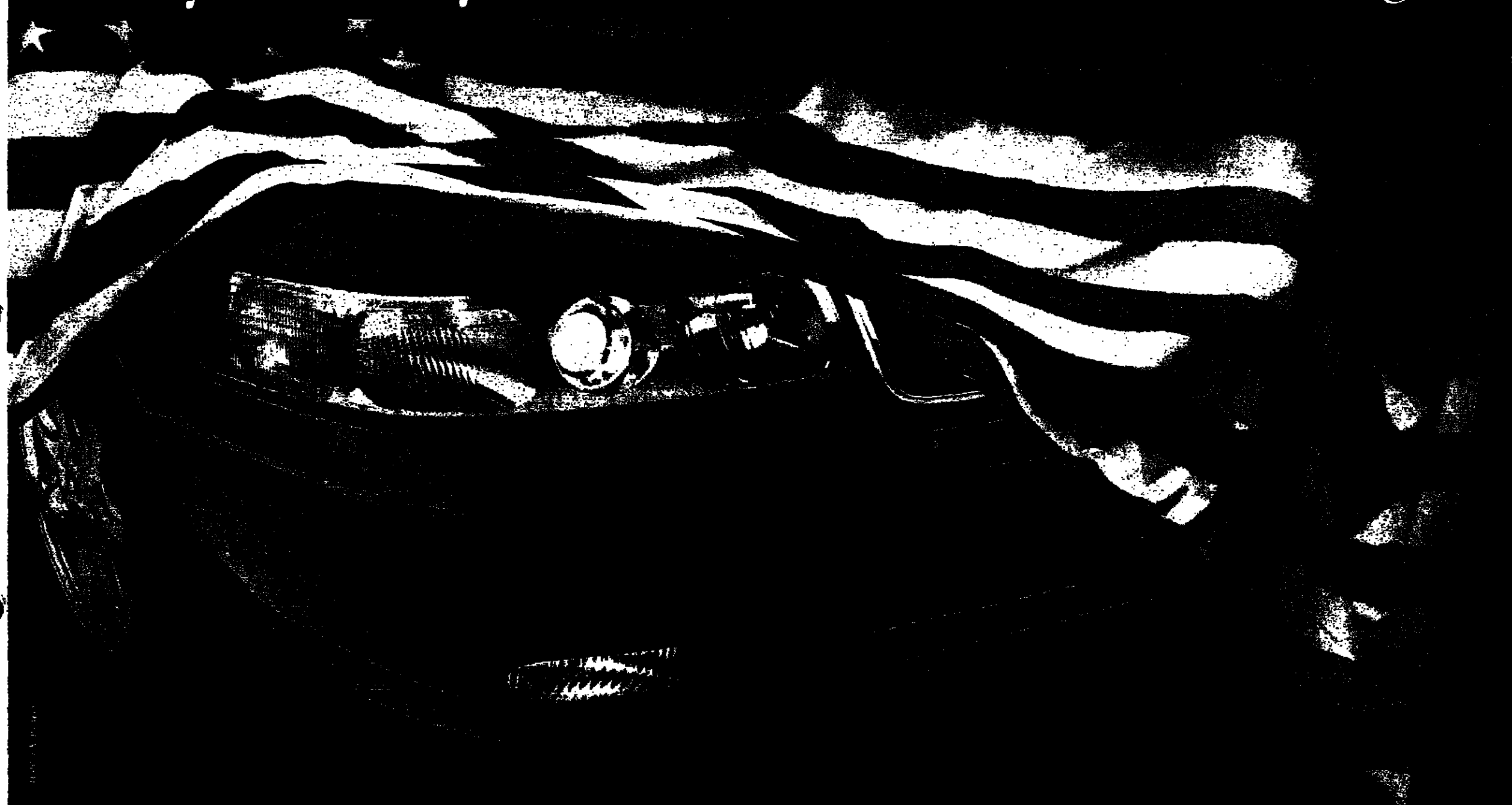
ditional photo opportunity with the models, turning his back on the ranks of cameras. The models looked aghast. Even before the show, McQueen, 27, made himself scarce to enjoy a cigarette and a beer in the lighting gantry. Designers usually remain backstage, checking each model as she goes out.

These eccentricities aside, the show, held in the Stade Francaise on the outskirts of Paris, inspired by the film *Paris Texas* and the style of Dolly Parton, featured some truly desirable clothes. There were leather dresses with slashed shoulders and skirts — half-cowgirl, half-Pocahontas — and a stunning orange drape-necked evening dress, with a flower design and a hem dropping to the floor at the back.

The models, including Kate Moss, Honor Fraser and Jodie Kidd, wore stiletos. One carried a silver revolver. They emerged to the sound of cracking whips and neighing horses, the clouds projected on to screens giving way to large gold Givenchy labels. It was a slick, surprisingly mature collection.

Sultry look: "There's no theme," said McCartney. It was a collection to make women confident

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Nurse collapses on hearing her life has been spared

Victim's brother takes 'blood money'
deal of £730,000 after months of
haggling, reports Roger Maynard

DEBORAH PARRY, the British nurse accused of murdering an Australian colleague, collapsed with relief in her prison cell in Saudi Arabia yesterday when told that her victim's brother had spared her from the death penalty.

Parry held on to her friend and fellow accused Lucille McLauchlan when lawyers told the pair that a blood money deal had been concluded after months of haggling.

A legal source said: "Both women have been in very low spirits. This news has lifted a huge burden but they still protest their innocence."

Frank Gilford said yesterday that he still believed the two nurses murdered his sister Yvonne, but was prepared to show mercy after receiving £730,000 from British companies and businessmen. He denied that it was blood money or that he would profit, saying the cash would fund a ward in his sister's memory in an Adelaide hospital. Last night the hospital authorities said they were undecided about whether to accept such a donation.

The two British families were told the news in a telephone call from their Australian lawyers in the early hours of yesterday and said

they were "relieved and delighted". They hope to visit the women next week.

Both nurses are reported to be in falling health and "greatly dispirited" according to a legal source and are "dreading facing many more months" in the overcrowded and insanitary Dammam Central Prison. However, the Saudi court is expected to deliver a swift verdict on Ms Parry, 38, from Alton, Hampshire.

Defence lawyers are resigned to the court returning a guilty verdict as the Islamic judges relied on the women's confessions, which they say were forced out of them by sexual coercion. McLauchlan, 31, from Dundee, has already been sentenced to eight years and 500 lashes.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, welcomed Mr Gilford's waiver, but said: "This is not the end of the story. It removes the threat of beheading, that will be immensely valuable news to both the nurses in jail, and also a great relief to their families."

"I did say our objective would be to try to achieve an outcome in which neither nurse was beheaded, and neither nurse was flogged in public. We are half way there and we will now be looking at



Frank Gilford, right, with his lawyers Vernon Cassin, left, and Osama al-Sulaim

how we can achieve both those objectives."

If found guilty Ms Parry is likely to face an eight-year sentence. Mr Gilford's clemency deal does not extend to reprieving McLauchlan from a public flogging.

Defence lawyers have appealed against that sentence and have warned the Saudi authorities that the nurse is not "physically strong enough" to withstand such a punishment.

Senior Saudi diplomats have assured the women and

the British Government that the nurses will be neither flogged nor beheaded. Their suggestion is that the women will face a reduced jail term, and can expect to be pardoned eventually.

The nurses' Saudi lawyer last night criticised Mr Gilford for delaying his waiver until he increased his own stake in the blood money. Salah al-Hejailan said Mr Gilford should not receive a penny until he keeps his side of the bargain, which includes denying an allegation made

by Saudi investigators that his sister was involved in a lesbian relationship with the two Britons.

He also wants the 57-year-old courier driver to press the Saudis to release damning evidence in the case which casts guards working at the hospital complex as the main suspects. Such evidence is too late to affect the court's verdict on Ms Parry, and might not be allowed in any appeal.

Additional reporting by Michael Theodoulou and Daniel McGrory

Leader of the inn crowd dies aged 88

By Philip Davies
Broughton

ALDO BERNI, who gave millions their first big taste of dining out, has died aged 88. Steak dinners at Berni Inns helped many Britons break free from postwar austerity.

Mr Berni and his brother, Frank, arrived in Britain from Italy with their family in the 1920s. They were part of a generation of young men from the Mediterranean, including Lord Forte, who were to dominate post-war British catering and hotel ownership.

The Berni brothers drew their inspiration from steakhouses and diners in the United States, which had become hugely popular with limited menus and low prices. They began their business in Bristol, buying a pub called The Horis, and opened their first Berni Inn steakhouse in 1943.

Their ability to produce a plate of steak and chips at a reasonable price was highly prized in an era of rationing and national parsimony. The chain soon evolved with the introduction of heavy wooden chairs, red velvet, and miniature paper parasols for the elaborate cocktails and puddings.

For all the elitist jokes about the Berni Inn staples of prawn cocktail, steak and chips, and black forest gâteau, the inns provided



Aldo Berni helped to set a postwar trend

treats for millions as they became the restaurants of the silent majority. The chain grew to 147 hotels and restaurants. In 1970 the Bernis sold it to Grand Met for £14.5 million.

Though Italian by birth, Aldo Berni always regarded himself as a native of Bristol, where he lived for most of his life. His wife, Esme, died last year, leaving more than £3.5 million to an animal sanctuary. Mr Berni, who had suffered a series of strokes, died in the Avon Gorge nursing home.

His daughter, Lina Boyd-Rochford, said yesterday: "He looked after people and was always willing to help those less fortunate than himself."

Frank Berni, 95, is living in Jersey with his wife, Lina, and is still handy with a steak knife.

Sex is a shot in the arm for giants of the ocean

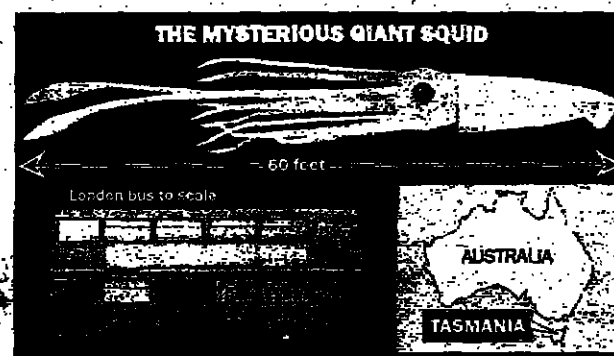
By Nigel Hawkes
Science Editor

THE giant squid, which lives 3,000ft deep in the ocean, has unusual mating habits. Two Australian zoologists have discovered that the males "inject" their sperm into the arms of the females, probably under hydraulic pressure.

Giant squid may grow up to 60ft long, and many have been caught in nets or washed up on shores. None, however, has ever been observed in the wild, so the creature remains poorly understood.

In *Nature*, Dr Mark Norman, of the Museum of Victoria, and a colleague, Dr C. C. Lu, of the University of Melbourne, describe two female giant squid caught in fishermen's nets off southern Australia. One of them had capsules of sperm between four and eight inches long embedded in an arm.

The sperm capsules, or spermatophores, had appar-



ently been injected by a male using its penis, an organ nearly a metre long. The discovery is not a complete surprise, as smaller squid use similar mating techniques.

Such abrupt mating practices may be dictated by the darkness of the deep ocean and infrequent meetings with others of its kind. Indeed, a male was recovered in the 1950s off Norway with spermatophores injected into several arms and its mantle.

"Another male may have injected the spermatophores while attempting to impregnate a female, accidentally 'ripping' a co-suitor," the zoologists speculate. "Alternatively, this male may have literally 'shot' himself in the foot."

Once embedded in the skin, the sperm may remain there for some time before it is used to fertilise the eggs. But how the females make use of the sperm when the time comes remains obscure.

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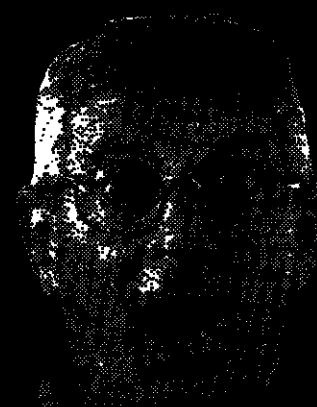


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Hole in heart baby 'did not have a chance. I failed my child'

A SURGEON boasted about the success of his complicated heart operations on babies minutes after one had died and another had been left seriously brain damaged, the General Medical Council was told yesterday.

The mother of the dead baby told the council's disciplinary committee that James Wisheart told her: "It is one of the best jobs I have ever done." To the mother of the other baby he appeared "absolutely euphoric about the way things had gone".

Mr Wisheart, 59, was a senior cardiac consultant at the Bristol Royal Infirmary from 1975 until last year. He and his colleague, Jenardan Dhasmana, deny serious professional misconduct. Both are alleged to have continued carrying out operations when they knew that at least twice as many babies died in their care as in other hospitals. Dr John Roylance, former chief executive of the United Bristol Healthcare Trust, also denies serious professional misconduct for allowing the two to go

**Ian Murray
hears mothers
tell inquiry
surgeon was
boasting after
tragic operations**

on operating, even though his duty was to stop them.

Bronwen Stewart's baby son, Ian, was four months old when Mr Wisheart operated on him in September 1993 for a complicated hole in the heart condition. Roger Henderson, QC, for the GMC, asked her if she was deeply distressed when she found Ian had been seriously brain-damaged. Mrs Stewart, 38, paused for a long moment before sobbing out her answer. "I have watched my little boy for years biting his fingers. I have changed his blood-covered sheets when he bites himself. I

am obviously deeply distressed."

Mrs Stewart and her husband, James, 40, are chartered accountants who live on a mine in central Queensland, Australia. They decided to have their baby in England where they could be closer to medical care. Within ten days of their son's birth in May, 1993, at a hospital in Taunton, Somerset, they were told by Stephen Jordan, a surgeon from Bristol, that he had a heart defect and would need an operation. Mrs Stewart said that as they had heard good reports of the Bristol hospital, they agreed the operation should take place there.

Mrs Stewart said she was told the risk of her son dying from the operation was one in five, that there was a one in 200 chance he would be brain-damaged, and that this was almost always reversible.

She said that at her first meeting with Mr Wisheart he carefully explained the operation to her, and warned there was only a 50 per cent chance he would survive. This had shocked her, but she had been reassured by her husband who said he was probably erring on the side of caution.

At a further meeting with Mr Wisheart shortly before the operation, "he said it [brain damage] is so rare that it just doesn't happen, and if it does, we know."

She said that when they agreed that the operation could go ahead, she had no idea about the true mortality rates for this type of procedure at the Bristol hospital. Instructed by the committee not to disclose the figures she had since been told about the mortality rates, she asked angrily: "These are cold figures, why can't I say them? Is

it just that it is so unpalatable?"

"I understand completely how you feel," Sir Donald Irvine, president of the GMC, said. "No, you don't," Mrs Stewart said. "My understanding was that the whole truth was going to come out. But if I can't say the truth, it is not going to come out."

She said she had later been told that 11 out of the 15 babies to undergo the operation at Bristol had died, and only one of the survivors had been Mr Wisheart's patient. "My baby didn't have a chance," she said. "I have to live with the knowledge that I failed my child terribly."

After the eight-hour operation September 30, 1993, Mr Wisheart "was absolutely euphoric," Mrs Stewart said. "He told us everything had gone exceedingly well. He was

totally jubilant about the way everything had gone. He said there had been a problem during the bypass, but he glossed over it and said things had gone really well." Two weeks later a neurologist had told them there was serious brain damage which had occurred.

He said he was perfectly happy about the way operation went. It was one of the best jobs he had done

urred while the bypass surgery was going on.

Mr Stewart said he would never have signed consent for the operation if he had known the true risk factor. He had discussed the possibility of brain damage with Mr Wisheart, whom he had found

to be a fantastic, lovely man who was very dedicated. "I understood that if Ian did suffer brain damage, he would not bring him back from the operating theatre. I left that meeting with the clear understanding that my son faced two outcomes, death or life."

Wisheart had carried out the operation in May 1994, and Hanna had died the same day. Mrs Silcox said: "He said he was perfectly happy about the way the operation had taken place. He said it was one of the best jobs he had ever done."

Earlier, Mr Henderson said that the surgeons had gone on operating despite mounting criticism and evidence from colleagues that the mortality rate at the hospital was far too high.

As chief executive, Dr Roylance had been in a difficult situation because Mr Wisheart was medical director of the trust and as such was the person from whom he should have sought advice.

"However, as chief executive and a doctor, Dr Roylance should have acted."

The hearing, in London, continues.



Bronwen and James Stewart, with their daughters, arriving at the hearing where they both gave evidence



James Wisheart and his wife, Janet, outside the General Medical Council hearing in London

NEWS IN BRIEF

MoD sued over stress disorder

A former gunner in the Royal Artillery is suing the Ministry of Defence over a claim that he is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder after witnessing a civilian being blown up by a terrorist bomb during a tour of Northern Ireland.

Neil Davidson, 27, from Newcastle upon Tyne, claims that since the incident he has been subject to uncontrollable bouts of rage. Last year he was given a 2½-year sentence for robbery which he has now served. He is accusing the Ministry of Defence of negligence for failing to treat him for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Passenger jailed

Sarah Bronks, 34, a mother of two, of Abbeywood, southeast London, who slapped an air stewardess on the face after being refused a drink on a flight from Lanzarote to Gatwick, was jailed for two months for assault by magistrates at Crawley, West Sussex.

Mitford sale

Asthal Manor, near Witney, Oxfordshire, the former home of Nancy Mitford, author of *Love in a Cold Climate*, has been sold for £3.15 million — more than twice its asking price — to David Davies, of the property holding company First Pacific Davies.

Spider woman

A woman with a fear of spiders, who bought a tarantula to impress her boyfriend, needed surgery after the spider nearly blinded her by flicking tiny barbed hairs into her eyes. Sarah Burton, 24, of Exeter, had hoped to overcome her arachnophobia.

Sporting first

An England football jersey from the first official international against Scotland, 125 years ago, fetched £21,275 at an auction in Glasgow. The jersey, with three lions and a knitted diamond motif, was worn by Arnold Kirke-Smith, the English centre forward.

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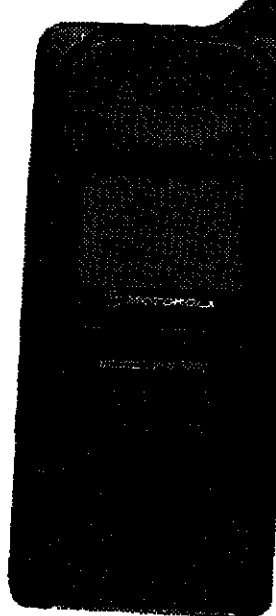
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No win, no fee justice will be a rip-off, says Bar chairman

Frances Gibb on fears that greater access to the law will prompt lawyers to charge more

THE Government's plan for a big expansion of "no win, no fee" work by lawyers is running into opposition from the Bar and consumer groups even before being unveiled this Saturday.

Robert Owen QC, chairman of the Bar, delivered a robust warning yesterday that the plans — aimed at increasing access to justice for people on middle incomes — will lead to the public being "ripped off" by lawyers.

Under no win, no fee agreements, lawyers take on cases for nothing and may increase their fees by up to double if they win.

On Saturday the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, is expected to unveil plans for expanding no-win, or conditional, fees to all claims over money or damages.

But Mr Owen, in a letter to Lord Irvine, is urging caution and further research before such a move is given the go-ahead. He said: "There is a very real danger of abuse. There is a conflict of interest at the very heart of these conditional fee agreements which could lead to the public being ripped off."

The amount by which lawyers can increase their fees was directly related to their

assessment of how risky a case was, he said. However, ordinary people would have no way of knowing whether that risk assessment was accurate.

"The blunt truth is that people will end up paying more to lawyers, and we do not think that is a satisfactory arrangement in the public interest."

Mr Owen's comments coincide with mounting concerns from consumer groups, the

Law Society, and from the Legal Action Group of lawyers and advice workers. All say that an expansion of no-win work should not be a substitute for civil legal aid.

If such aid is withdrawn as no-win fees are brought in, then many people would actually be denied access to justice, and be worse off than now, Mr Owen said yesterday. "To pursue a claim on a no-win fee basis, litigants will have to take out an insurance premi-

um in case they lose and have to pay the other side's costs," he said.

The minimum of such a premium would be £100, which people now on legal aid could not afford. Worse, in high-risk claims such as medical negligence, the premiums could run to thousands of pounds.

"In a medical negligence case I am appearing in at present, the client has had to pay £15,000 in insurance for

£100,000 worth of cover for legal costs."

Instead of no-win work, the Bar is urging the Government to consider its own proposals for a Contingency Legal Aid Fund, a self-financing scheme in which litigants put a slice of their winnings back into the fund.

"The lawyers get paid an appropriate level of fee without any uplift," Mr Owen said. "The whole basis of our scheme is that legal aid in its current form need not continue. Instead the scheme becomes self-financing."

"The key difference between what we and the Government propose is: do we want to pay lawyers more, or help each other to litigate?"

Lord Irvine has appeared to confirm that that civil legal aid will not be retained unaltered where "no win" work is available.

He told MPs this week that the Government would not tolerate "a state of affairs" in which the legal profession picked up the very strong cases which were highly likely to be won, together with a mark-up in fee and then left legal aid unchanged, so that the State got a high proportion of the losers and the profession got the lion's share of the winners.

Case against tobacco firms may fall over costs ruling

By FRANCES GIBB

BRITAIN'S first legal action against tobacco companies could collapse after a ruling allowing the companies to try to make the lung cancer victims' lawyers liable for costs of up to £20 million if they lose. The judgment strikes at the heart of the Government's plans for a big expansion of "no win, no fee" work.

Some 47 lung cancer victims are suing Gallaghers and Imperial Tobacco, with law-

yers doing the work on a no win, no fee basis because the victims could not obtain legal aid. Mr Justice Popplewell has said he will not debar the tobacco companies from seeking to recover their costs from the lawyers. The tobacco companies argue that it is the lawyers who are funding the litigation and therefore they are an interested party who should be liable for costs.

At a private hearing last Friday, Mr Justice Popplewell rejected an application by Leigh Day & Co, in which they

asked him to debar the tobacco companies from seeking to recover the costs of the action from the law firm, should it lose. His order will be challenged in the Court of Appeal.

If the Court of Appeal upholds Mr Justice Popplewell's decision, Leigh Day & Co would be forced to drop the case. Other law firms would also be far less keen to undertake no win, no fee work, and insurance premiums would be unobtainable for this high-risk litigation.

Stormy marriage of Queen's cousin ends in divorce

By EMMA WILKINS

THE troubled seven-year marriage of Marina Mowatt, daughter of Princess Alexandra and Sir Angus Ogilvy, came to a sad close yesterday. Ms Mowatt, 30, was granted a decree nisi on the grounds of the unreasonable behaviour of her husband, Paul, a 34-year-old photographer.

In an affidavit Ms Mowatt told the court that she was suffering "stress-related symptoms" as a result of the problems of the marriage, which began in 1990 when she was five months pregnant.

While she wished her husband to have "plentiful contact" with their two children, Zenouska, 7, and Christian, 4, Ms Mowatt said the continuation of the marriage was causing them emotional suffering. Neither Ms Mowatt, who is 31st in line to the throne, nor her husband was in court for the 60-second hearing at Somerset House in London.

The couple separated last April when Ms Mowatt applied for a High Court order preventing her husband from

approaching her or their home in Teddington, south-west London. The order came after an incident when Mr Mowatt was said to have attacked his wife while in a drunken state.

The couple's marriage began amid reports of a rift between Ms Mowatt and her parents. Ms Mowatt, who is the Prince of Wales's goddaughter, initially declared that she would not "waddle" down the aisle while noticeably pregnant.

After the wedding — at which the bride wore black — Ms Mowatt posed for photographs taken by her husband that showed her holding a gun and wearing a crown with thigh-high boots and corsets at her feet.

In the affidavit, Ms Mowatt said that Mr Mowatt moved out of the matrimonial home in April last year. The couple were briefly reunited three months later but Mr Mowatt refused to attend marriage guidance counselling and the problems remained unsolved.



Mr and Mrs Mowatt and daughter Zenouska during a reconciliation last year

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man gets 11 years for death plot

A Belfast man accused of murdering the INLA chief Gino Gallagher has been jailed for 11 years for plotting another killing. Jailing Charles Kevin Begley, 26, at Belfast Crown Court, Mr Justice Kerr said it was accepted he had nothing to do with the murder of Gallagher, who was shot at his local DSS office in January last year.

Begley pleaded guilty to conspiring to murder a person or persons unknown. The judge told him that people who engaged in such conspiracies must accept they would be dealt with severely.

Drunken killer

Gary Ross, 28, who pushed a teenager on to a railway line then went for a meal, was jailed for five years for manslaughter by Inner London Crown Court. He was cleared of murdering Paul Simms, who had been celebrating his 18th birthday.

Fellow inmate

The family of Mona Henderson, 95, a stroke victim, have lodged a complaint that she was put in a bed opposite a handcuffed male prisoner in an emergency assessment ward at Dyrbyrn Hospital, Co Durham. The hospital has to serve three prisons.

Trust plan fails

Plans to build more than 200 houses on a hillside owned by the National Trust have been turned down. Conwy councillors rejected the scheme for Parciau Farm at Old Colwyn in Chwyd after receiving a 700-name petition of opposition from local people.

Off the scent

Police are testing a spray for officers to aim at aggressive dogs. The Derbyshire force says that the mixture of natural oils is intended to confuse the animals but not injure them. Big dogs are often used by criminals to help them to resist arrest.

CORRECTION

Mohamed Al Fayed did not say (report, October 13) that the last words of Diana, Princess of Wales were imparted to him by a nurse. In fact he has never identified the individual concerned.

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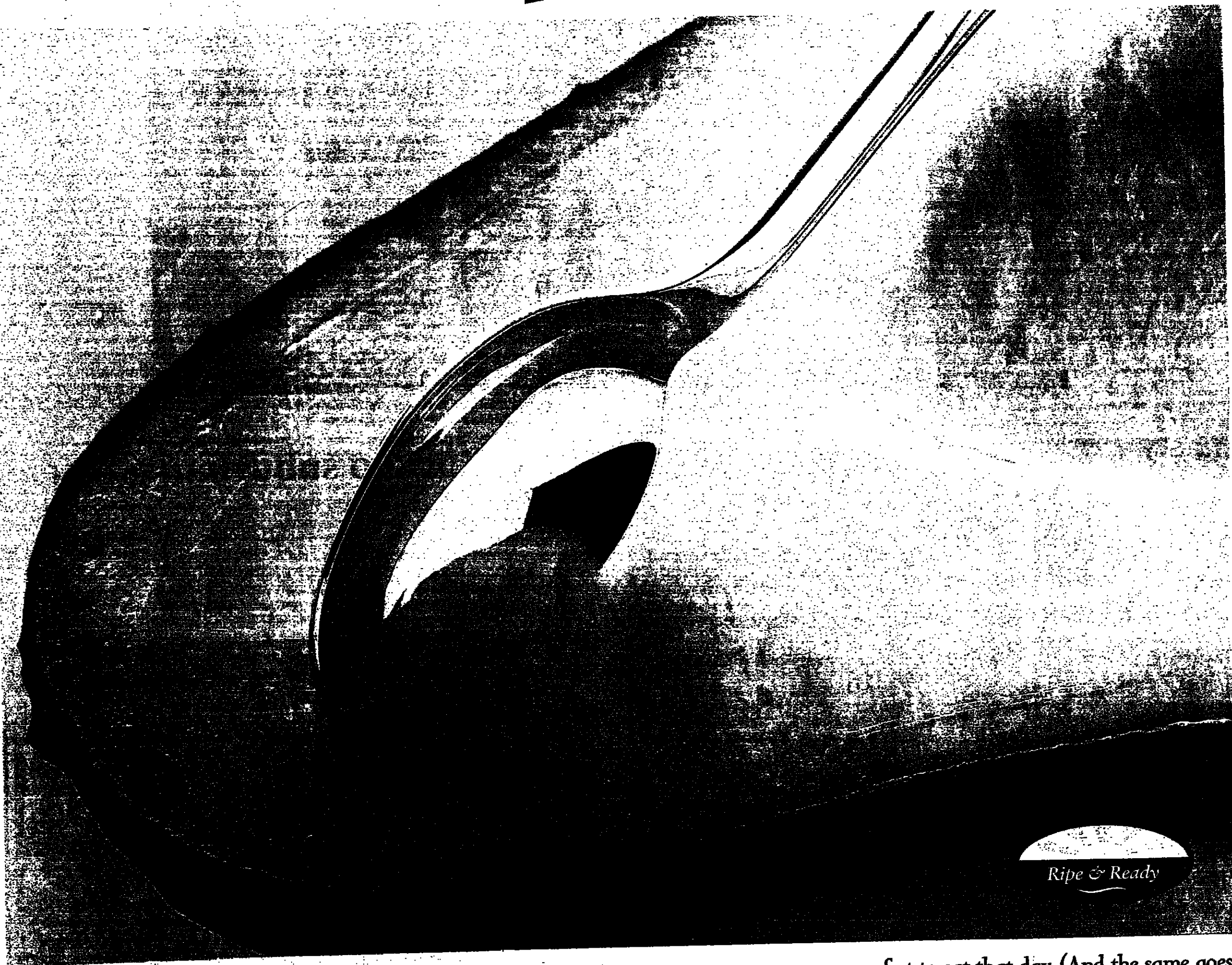
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Courts will get power to lock up young offenders

MAGISTRATES' courts are to be given new powers to put teenage "bail bandits" as young as 12 behind bars, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, announced yesterday.

The powers are aimed at child offenders who exploit the criminal justice system by continuing to commit crime while waiting to appear in court because they know it is difficult to put them in custody. At the moment social services decide whether to keep suspects aged between 12 and 14 in secure accommodation.

Legislation later this year in the planned Crime and Disorder Bill will pass this power to youth courts. Extra spaces will be found by halting plans to move 15 and 16-year-olds out of young offender institutions run by the Prison Service. Persistent young offenders will be defined as any young person who has been dealt with by the courts three times and who commits another crime within three years of the last appearance.

Speaking at the launch of new guidance for the criminal justice system and the publication of a consultation paper, Mr Straw said it was crucial to deal with teenage criminals in the age range between 12 and 14. He said: "The system appears to be very soft in the short term but very nasty to these kids in the long run."

Mr Straw said persistent young criminals under 15 knew that, if they limited their crimes to low-level offences,

'Bail bandits' as young as 12 are to be held

before trial, writes Stewart Tendler

they could continue to operate with impunity. He said it was important to deal with the offenders quickly and effectively if the authorities were to have any chance of keeping them from a life of crime. He cited the case of a 13-year-old boy in Nottingham this week who had committed almost 200 crimes. He was arrested 58 times but was too young to be put into custody.

Unveiling a series of plans to improve the youth court system and accelerate ways of dealing with the hard core of persistent offenders, Mr Straw said that courts could be listed in national league tables to show how efficient they were.

He said league tables would show which youth courts were slow in trying juvenile offenders and which could cut bureaucracy and unnecessary legal delays. On average, courts were taking 4½ months to deal with young offenders and in one area cases were taking up to eight months. Mr Straw said cases could often be dealt with in little more than two months. Ministers

were also considering introducing "fines" for courts, lawyers, probation and police services for delaying cases. He said that the "fines" might involve penalties on budgets, but the real aim would be to share the offending courts or services into better performance.

He said it was time "to end this very sloppy approach". Defendants in cases were routinely remanded for three weeks when courts had been told that they must set back cases for no more than two weeks. They waited for reports on defendants who were already well-known to them.

Backing the plans, Paul Cavadin, chief officer of the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, said: "Faster justice need not mean harsher justice. The sooner sentencing takes place the quicker constructive programmes of supervision tackling the cause of offending can begin."



Jean Coussins, of the Portman Group, said teenagers preferred alcopops

Teenagers double alcohol intake in past seven years

BY A CORRESPONDENT

YOUNG teenagers are drinking twice as much alcohol as they did in 1990, according to figures published yesterday. Fessa Jowell, the Minister for Public Health, told a conference on tackling under-age drinking that the statistic was worrying.

Overall, the average number of units drunk in a week by 11 to 15-year-olds in England has risen from 0.8 units in 1990 to 1.6 units last year and in Scotland to 1.9 units — the equivalent of nearly a pint of beer each week. A hard core of 5 per cent of boys and 3 per cent of girls of the same age are drinking more than 15 units, or seven pints of beer, a week.

The survey, carried out by the Department of Health officials, also shows that more and more young people are drinking alcohol on a weekly basis. The number of English 11 to 15-year-olds who had drunk alcohol in the week before the survey had gone up from 21 to 27 per cent.

Figures for Scotland, covering the 12 to 15 age group, show an increase from 14 to 23 per cent.

The survey into under-age drinking, to be published in full later this month, stresses that the overwhelming majority of teenagers had drunk little or nothing in the previous seven days. Many were drinking only in moderation.

Ms Jowell told the conference: "These figures... further emphasise the need to make tackling alcohol misuse one of the Government's priorities."

Another report laid before the conference, organised by the drinks industry's watchdog, the Portman Group, showed that one in five teenagers named alcopops as their favourite alcoholic drink. However, evidence suggested that those choosing the drinks were more likely to be moderate drinkers rather than among the minority of teenagers drinking heavily. (PA News)

DJ Clarke goes from tax to sax

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

LIFE away from power is exposing Kenneth Clarke to all sorts of new adventures. Last week in Blackpool the former Chancellor eschewed the Imperial Hotel for a bed and breakfast. This week he is a disc jockey.

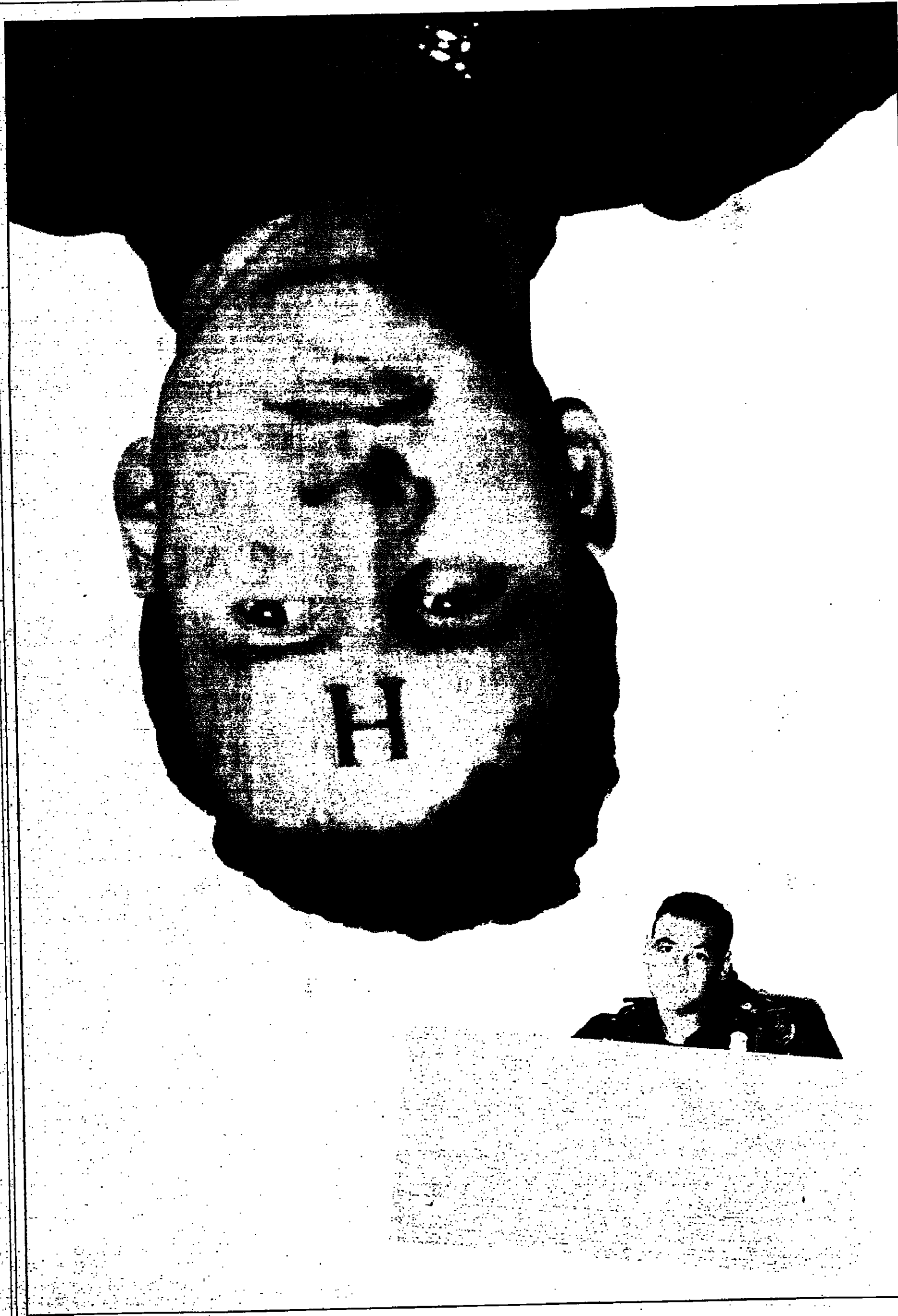
Tonight, listeners will hear Mr Clarke make his debut at his local BBC station, Radio Nottingham, and he will be back next week. He is a holiday stand-in for the regular presenter of the weekly two-hour *Jazz Incorporated* show, broadcast across the Midlands.

A jazz buff, he will be heard playing records from his own collection, interspersed with blokish banter. He said: "Jazz is the only music I take seriously. I'm obsessive about tenor saxophones, but I chose

a whole range of music. The earliest recording is from 1923 and the most recent from the 1990s."

The two shows, for which he is not being paid, have been pre-recorded. The new chairman of the Tory Reform Group said: "I enjoyed it very much and I'm open to offers. I'm still very short of time but if I get asked to do it again, I'd jump at the chance. I'm looking forward to getting a tape of the programmes so I can play them in the car."

A BBC spokesman said that the MP for Rushcliffe was "a bit of a natural." The shows will be broadcast between 7pm and 9pm tonight and next Thursday, and can be heard on Radio Nottingham, Radio Leicester, Radio Derby and Radio Lincolnshire.



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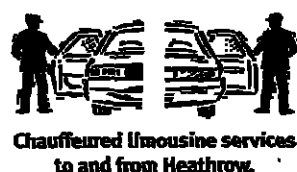
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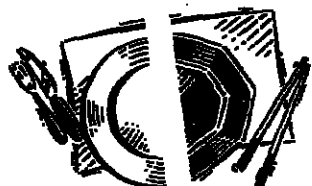
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Smith supports computer vision for libraries



Smith said £770m must be raised as package

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

CHRIS SMITH, the Culture Secretary, yesterday gave the Government's support to a plan to transform Britain's public libraries by linking them into a nationwide computer network. Speaking at the launch of a report by the Library and Information Commission, Mr Smith said that it was "a defining moment" for the library service. The vision is an integrated grid linking libraries, schools and government, made possible by technological change. The Prime Minister has taken a personal interest and has asked me to report to him on the

prospects. We will seek to make a response early in the New Year.

Raising the necessary £770 million was beyond any single body, he said. Partnerships would be needed between local and national government and industry, with lottery money also a possibility. "We have to put together a package. I don't have £770 million in my back pocket, but the Government has committed £100 million to the National Grid for Learning, which is an earnest of good faith."

The report, *New Library: The People's Network*, says the service's future depends on taking advantage of electronic distribution and access. Matthew Evans, chairman of the

commission and of Faber and Faber, said: "The library is the perfect place for citizens to be given a window on the nation's resources. Whether you live in cities or deep rural areas, the library will bring you the world's literature, information and ideas."

"The report argues that a UK-wide information network made available through libraries on the basis of a high-specification central core could do more to encourage the spread of information, knowledge, and communication technology skills among the population than any other measure the Government could introduce."

People cared about their libraries, Mr Evans said, but there was less

evidence that politicians did. The library service had not been given the support and funding it needed to sustain itself. But now there was an opportunity "to seize the moment". The Library Association's chief executive, Ross Shillman, said that "the public library service is in danger" unless the proposals were adopted.

The report suggests that libraries should offer access to a wide range of information sources via the Internet, plus educational and commercial networks, video-conference facilities and digital archives, all in addition to the printed word. Mr Smith said: "New technology will complement but not replace the traditional role."

Publishers accused of rating hype above talent

Overrated few get all the attention, top literary agent tells Darya Alberge

A LEADING literary agent yesterday accused publishers of hyping minor books by a small circle of overrated authors to compete with similar ones by their rivals, while ignoring the literary talents of those who can really write.

Speaking to *The Times* at the Frankfurt Book Fair, Giles Gordon of Curtis Brown — whose authors include Fay Weldon, Vikram Seth and Sue Townsend — spoke of "the cult of Martin Amis, the cult of Julian Barnes, the cult of Jeanette Winterson, the cult of Ian McEwan."

"Those four all dominate the literary world. They have been the gangsters of literature in the last 20 years." They were closely followed by younger writers, "nearly all of the same age, with the same kind of taste, suits and hairstyles."

"I don't blame the writers. I blame the publishers who have hyped them. It's all a mafia." Publishers, he said, are unadventurous, only wanting to publish what everyone else was releasing. He was speaking out after being frustrated by publishers' reaction to a book which he describes as one of the most impressive first novels he has read in 20 years.

Publishers had yet to see the qualities of *The Field*, by Colm

O'Gaora, 31, an Irish writer, with a narrative set in a village in Ireland, he said. It tells the story of a woman and her father who live off the land, with a smallholding growing potatoes, and who suffer a terrible harvest. Little happened, Mr Gordon said, but the author's loving descriptions of the countryside were as expansive and evocative as 19th-century classics and his characters had touches of Chekhov and Virgil.

"There's no plot. What's wrong with that?" he said. "People read novels to enhance their own lives, to meet people in the fictional sense. In Colm's book, there is a love of characters in exactly the same way as with great writers such as Balzac and Dickens."

But, over the past few months, several publishers had turned it down, damning it as too quiet and rural. "It is a wonderful piece of writing," Mr Gordon said, "like a symphony or concerto that develops — a beautifully crafted work of art. You can't stop reading it."

A new novel has to shout to be noticed in an industry where around 100,000 books are published in Britain alone. Competition is fierce. The name of the game was quantity of titles not quality, Mr



It's all a mafia, says Giles Gordon, who has failed to find a publisher for a book he describes as wonderful

Gordon said. "To be published these days, you have to be female, attractive and 23."

The root of the problem, Mr Gordon said, was that publishers did not know what they wanted. Although they would not admit it, he said, fewer and fewer of them were editing, relying on agents to do it for them. He said that publishers had admitted to him: "If you're paying all that money for a book, why spend more editing it?" He added: "That's the culture, or lack of culture, today."

Jason Cowley, page 19
Books, pages 40, 41

Stout walking shoes advised

THE Frankfurt Book Fair opened yesterday with a record number of exhibitors. A total of 9,544 companies from 106 countries are spread across a series of halls spanning the equivalent of 27 football fields.

Numbers are swelled by those hawk books and, more usually, ideas for books. The editor of Kitty Kelley's controversial book on the Royal Family was approaching British publishers, asking them if they were "brave

enough" to publish it in Britain.

More than 900 British publishers are at the fair. The Americans are strongly represented, as are the French, Italians and east Europeans. Germany has 2,500 exhibitors.

It is no wonder that publishers, literary agents, rights people and booksellers sigh a lot at the very mention of Frankfurt. "Absolutely massive," they say, advising sensible walking shoes and

lamenting a city whose standstill traffic makes London seem like a car-free zone.

But no one questions whether it is worth it. This is where deals are done and names are made on the international circuit, with everyone hoping to discover the next Le Carré or Grisham.

It is virtually impossible to calculate the number of books being offered. However, those on Diana, Princess of Wales appear to outnumber all others.

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CHANGING TIMES

Romania plans to open files of security police

By Roger Boyes

THE Romanian Government is contemplating a dramatic move to mark the eighth anniversary of the death of Nicolae Ceausescu, the dictator — opening the files of the dreaded secret police, the Securitate.

Since one in three Romanians is believed to have collaborated with the Securitate during the Communist era, the effect on the country is likely to be devastating. The issue is splitting the main coalition partners and there is apprehension throughout the political class in the capital, Bucharest.

Even so, sources close to Victor Ciorbea, the Prime Minister, says he plans to give public access to the files within the next two months and allow Romanians, like the east Germans, to unravel the web of denunciation and spying that was spun round them.

The point is to make a clear break with the post-Communist regime of President

Iliescu, defeated a year ago, who gained power in 1990 with the help of Securitate agents and who tolerated murky espionage techniques, including widespread phone tapping.

The compromising of the Swiss Ambassador last year — he was having an affair with a Romanian journalist and alleged secret agent — demonstrated that, although the Securitate was officially abolished in 1990, its successor, the SRI, uses familiar methods against familiar targets.

About 60 per cent of the new secret service are former Securitate agents, and one of the most powerful men in the country for the past eight years has been the spy chief, Virgil Magureanu. He was a member of the small group that organised the execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu on Christmas Day 1989.

Naturally there is resistance to declassifying the files.

Many agents left to set up private businesses; one became chief economist for the Central Bank, and others joined either the remodelled Communist Party or right-wing nationalist parties. They all have something to lose.

Now, however, the presidency is in the hands of the democrat, Emil Constantinescu, and the Government of Mr Ciorbea is a mixture of Christian and social democrats, peasants, liberals and representatives of the Hungarian minority. They want to demonstrate, ahead of Nato and European Union entry negotiations, that Romania has gained a new democratic self-confidence.

But the critical question is whether the SRI has been destroying files. One incident in June 1990 became public, and suggests there is reason for suspicion. A truckload of files was buried clumsily in Ceausescu's old hunting grounds. Villagers stumbled on the discarded archives and discovered reports about the Opposition, intercepted correspondence between writers, the minutes of a publishing house board meeting, transcripts which showed the Hungarian minority was still a top target for agents, and evidence that Romanian spies stirred up coal miners' protests. How many more files have been dumped or shredded remains to be seen.

At present, access to the files is regulated by a foggy phrased law which leaves the final decision to the head of the SRI.

The most radical reform proposals come from Ticu Dumitrescu, a senator, who wants a system akin to the Gacaca authority in Berlin — which ensures public access — and at the same time wants leading politicians and civil servants to answer in court for any crimes exposed by the files.

A more limited scheme is likely to be introduced — and access will probably be confined to files collected before 1989.



Nicolae Ceausescu addresses his final rally in Bucharest, four days before being shot in 1989



Dr John Walker at his laboratory in Cambridge yesterday after the Nobel jury announced that he was joint winner of the chemistry prize

Cell chemistry wins Briton Nobel prize

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

A BRITISH scientist, Dr John Walker of the Medical Research Council's Molecular Biology Laboratory in Cambridge, was yesterday awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for his studies of energy generation in cells.

He shares the prize with two others: Dr Paul Boyer of the University of California at Los Angeles, and Dr Jens Skou of Aarhus University, Denmark, both of whom have worked on the same problem. Dr Skou wins half the \$1 million (£600,000) prize, and Drs Walker and Boyer a quarter each.

The physics prize was also split between three scientists — Steven Chu of Stanford University in California, William D. Phillips of the US National Institute of Standards and Technology in Maryland and Claude Cohen-Tannoudji of the College de France and Ecole Normale



Paul Boyer, left, from America and Jens Skou, a Dane, who also worked on cell energy generation

Supérieure de Paris. They all worked on the use of lasers to cool and trap atoms.

Dr Walker won his share of the prize for studies of the enzymes involved in the production of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which acts as a store of energy in bodies called

mitochondria inside cells. The energy is generated by pumping protons across the membrane that surrounds the mitochondrion, and Dr Walker has spent 15 years studying this "transmembrane pump" using X-ray crystallography. His raw material has been

cow's hearts, bought from a Northampton slaughterhouse and pulverised at his Cambridge laboratory so the constituents of the heart muscle can be separated out. The enzymes are crystallised and studied using an X-ray beam at Daresbury Laboratory in Cheshire.

The results have helped to confirm a model proposed by Dr Boyer for the formation of ATP from adenosine diphosphate and inorganic phosphate, the Nobel jury said. Dr Skou won his share of the prize for discovering an enzyme which maintains the balance of sodium and potassium ions in the cell.

Dr Walker, a senior scientist at the Cambridge laboratory from which several earlier Nobel prize-winners have come, was born in Halifax in 1941. He was educated at Raistrick Grammar School in West Yorkshire, and St Catherine's College, Oxford, where he was awarded his PhD in 1969. He has worked in

Cambridge since 1974, and was elected a fellow of the Royal Society two years ago.

The physics prize, worth \$1 million and shared equally by the three winners, marks success in the precise manipulation of atoms.

Normally atoms and molecules in gases cannot be studied because they move too swiftly, at up to 2,500mph. Normal cooling does not help, because then the gas condenses and ultimately solidifies. And even at temperatures a few degrees above absolute zero, the atoms are still moving at about 250mph.

The three winners have developed methods of using laser light to cool gases to temperatures of a few millionths of a degree above absolute zero, and of keeping the atoms trapped so that they can be studied. "The new methods have contributed greatly to increasing our knowledge of the interplay between radiation and matter," the Nobel jury said.

Plea by Yeltsin heads off Duma confrontation

FROM RICHARD BEESTON
IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT YELTSIN intervened last night to head off a bruising confrontation with parliament: he offered an olive branch to opposition leaders, who promptly postponed their vote of no confidence in the Government.

After a day of frantic behind-the-scenes negotiations between government officials and members of the Duma, the lower house of parliament, deputies voted to put off the motion until next Wednesday.

The move came after Mr Yeltsin twice telephoned Gennadi Seleznev, the Communist Speaker of the Duma,

who relayed a conciliatory message from the Kremlin, saying that the President wanted co-operation rather than confrontation with the opposition-led chamber.

"I appeal to the members of the State Duma not to rush for the resignation of the Government today," said Mr Yeltsin's message. "I do not want con-

frontation. I do not want a new election.

"For the sake of calm in Russia, I appeal to the 145 [Communist] deputies who initiated the no-confidence motion to remove this issue from today's agenda. I guarantee that the Government will draw conclusions from the criticism."



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Papon: 'I risked life to aid Jews'

Bordeaux Maurice Papon, on trial for deporting Jews to Nazi death camps during the Second World War, said yesterday that he did his utmost to save as many Jews as possible.

Addressing the Bordeaux assize court, M Papon, 87, said: "I did my utmost to save the maximum number of members of the Jewish community, perhaps at the risk of my life."

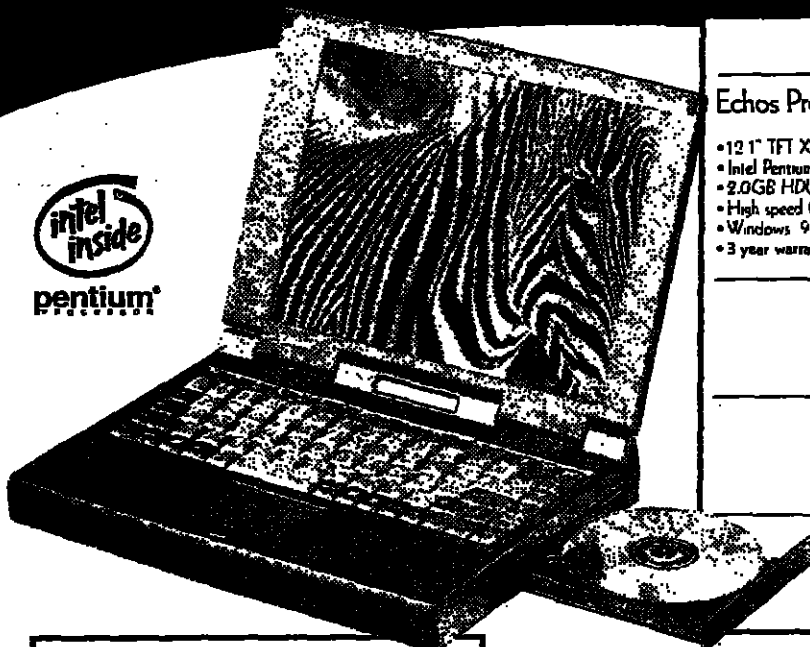
M Papon is accused of crimes against humanity for deporting more than 1,500 Jews to death camps when he was secretary-general at the Bordeaux prefecture during the war. "I risked deportation, arrest and perhaps my life when I scrubbed the names of 139 Jews from a list," he said. Speaking of the "catastrophic and unhappy lot of the Jewish community", M Papon said his "heart was torn by the Nazi repression of the Jews".

Earlier, the court rejected a defence request to drop the case. In its decision, the court noted that it had taken 16 years to prepare the "complex" case against M Papon and that both parties were equal in the eyes of the law.

The defence had argued that media coverage was biased and had jeopardised M Papon's chances for a fair and just trial.

M Papon is the highest-ranking official of France's collaborationist Vichy regime to stand trial for crimes against humanity. He is charged with ordering the deportation of 1,690 Jews, including 223 children. (AFP, AP)

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Rome frescoes damaged as quakes spread

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

PANIC caused by the earthquakes that have shaken Umbria over the past three weeks reached Rome yesterday when it emerged that the latest powerful tremor had damaged the Baroque church of Sant' Andrea delle Fratte in the heart of the capital.

There were further aftershocks yesterday, and the continuing tremors dominated all news bulletins, overshadowing the resolution of the political crisis facing the centre-left Government of Professor Romano Prodi.

Since the first double quake on September 26, which killed 11 people and brought down frescoes by Cimabue and Giotto in the Basilica of St Francis at Assisi, there have been a series of tremors registering between four and five on the Richter scale.

In many cases structures undermined, but still stand-

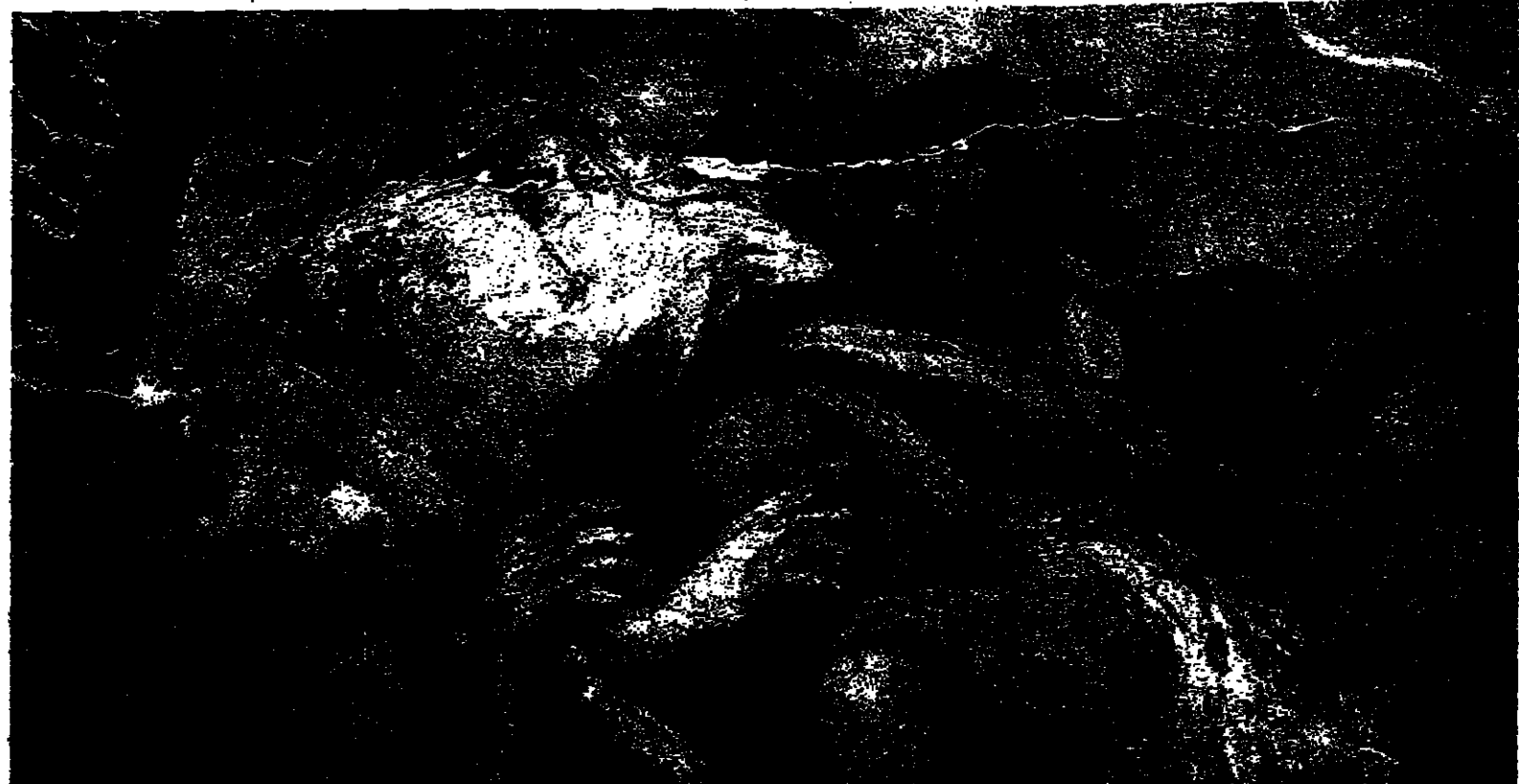
ing, after the first earthquakes have been brought down by subsequent shocks. Thousands have been made homeless in the poor villages and towns of the Umbrian hills, and now face freezing temperatures and winter rains in tents or prefabricated shelters.

The latest earthquake, on Tuesday evening, registered 4.9 with its epicentre at Sellano, 20 miles from Assisi. It was followed by lesser

shocks during the night registering between three and four.

The earthquake caused no further damage at Assisi, where engineers had just used a giant crane to place a metal cage over the crumbling tympanum on the basilica, preventing it from crashing through the roof and destroying medieval frescoes by Cimabue and Lorenzetti.

But the tremor brought down the clock tower on the medieval town hall at Foligno, a few miles away. Maurizio Salari, the Mayor, said with tears in his eyes that the "symbol of the town" had fallen. Engineers spent yesterday salvaging the tower's two bells from the rubble. The sight of the falling tower — captured live on Italian television and shown repeatedly since — has Italians wondering whether the quakes will be followed by "the Big One". At Sant' An-



Pasquale Marini's 18th-century *Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes* fresco, cracked in the latest Italian quake.

drea delle Fratte in Rome, Father Andrea Lia, the priest in charge, said that cracks had opened up both in the cupola and in an 18th-century fresco by Pasquale Marini, *The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes*. Another priest, who raised the

alarm, said that he had been reading in an upper floor of the adjoining friary when "the room began to shake and my chair moved across the room". The church, near the Spanish Steps, is a Baroque masterpiece. First built in the 12th

century, in what was then countryside on Rome's outskirts, it became the church of the Scots in Rome until the Reformation. It was rebuilt in the early 17th century by Giovanni Guerra with a dome and campanile by Borromini. Be-

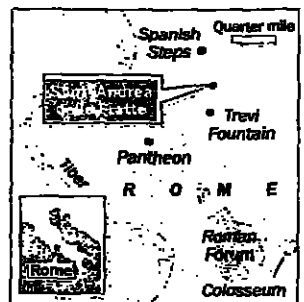
sides the Marini frescoes it has two superb angels carved by Bernini, which were intended to decorate the bridge across the Tiber to the Castel Sant' Angelo, but were considered too fine to be exposed to the elements. It also houses the Chapel of the Miraculous Madonna, commemorating the 1842 appearance of the Virgin Mary to a Jewish banker who became a Christian missionary.

A number of palazzos and blocks of flats in Rome also suffered damage. *Il Messa-*

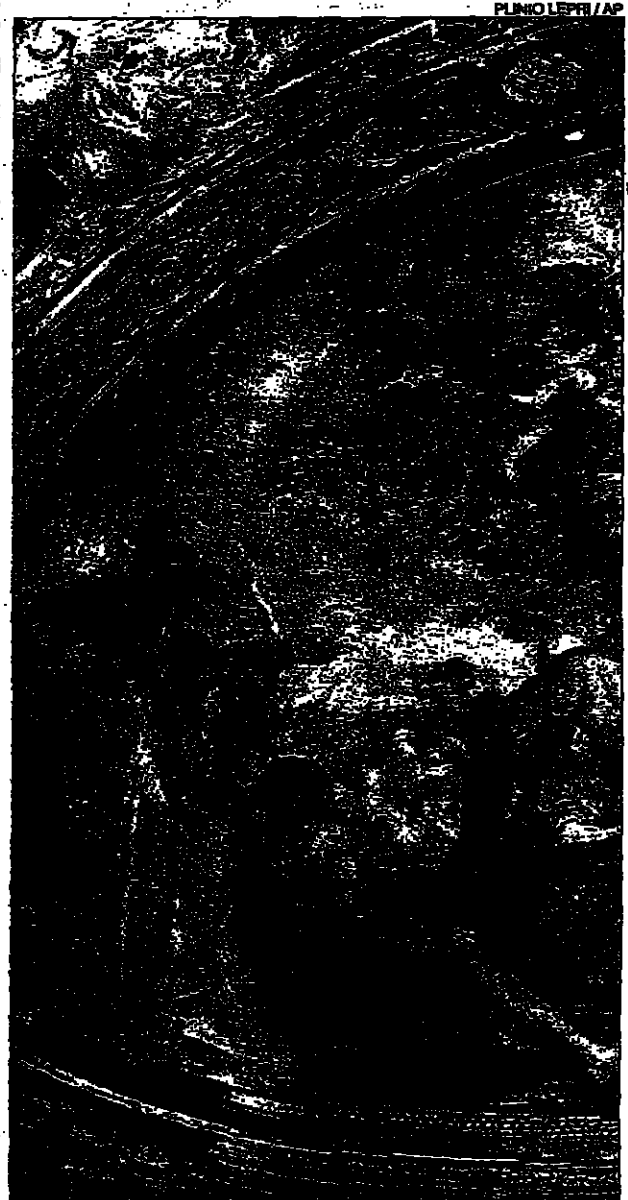
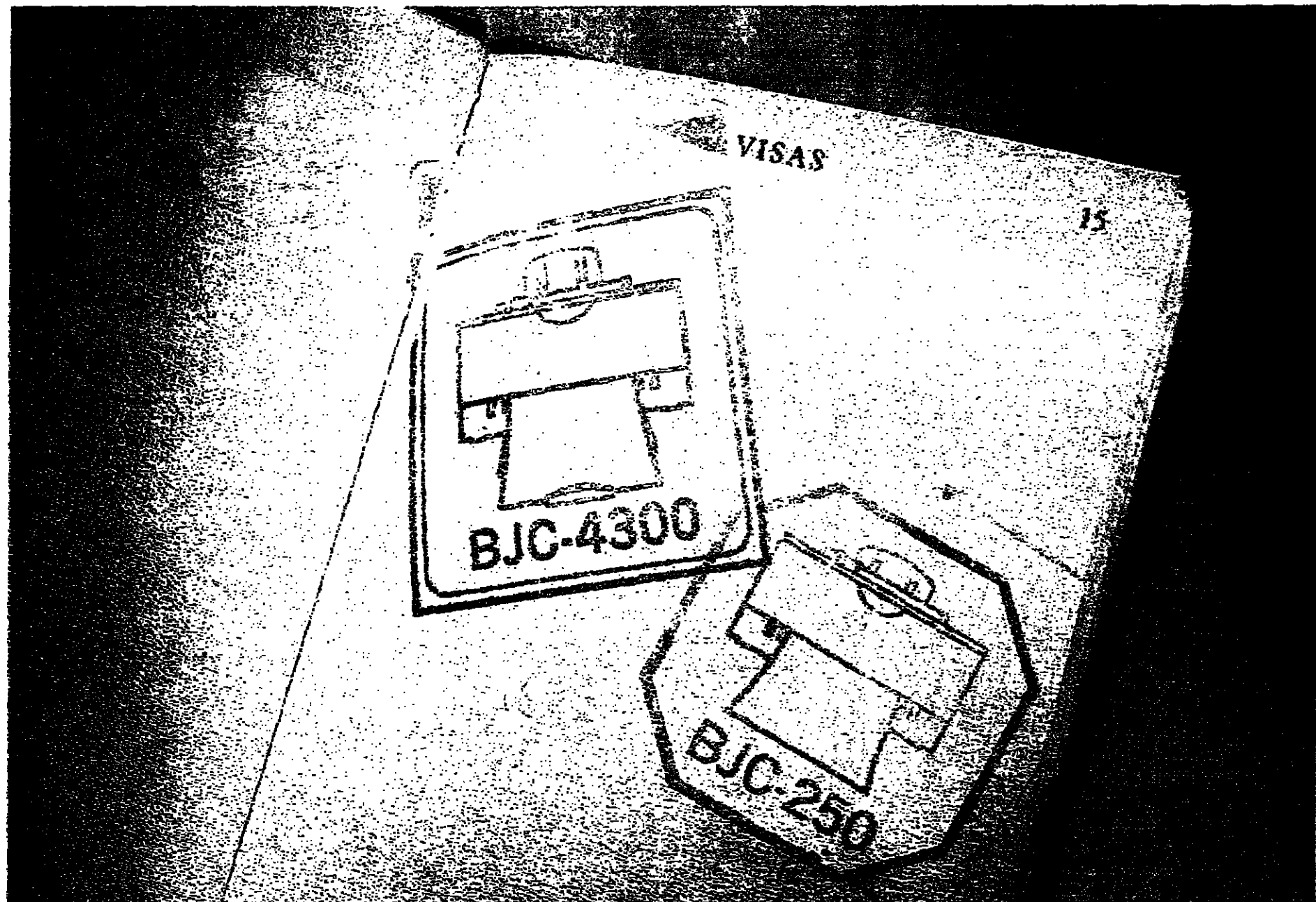
gero, the offices of which are close to the damaged church, said that it was becoming "difficult to remain calm".

□ Santiago: An earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale rocked much of Chile and parts of neighbouring Argentina. It set off landslides and killed a family of five and three others when the walls of their homes collapsed. About 100 people were injured.

Several aftershocks hit the affected area, about 140 miles north of Santiago, for several hours yesterday. (AP)



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The damaged vault at Sant' Andrea delle Fratte

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Author to drum up anti-Kohl support

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

GÜNTER GRASS, Germany's pre-eminent novelist, has pledged to campaign for a Social Democratic-Green coalition in an attempt to topple Helmut Kohl.

His aim is to mobilise like-minded German intellectuals before next year's elections and make them into an active, articulate lobby for change in the same way that writers and artists came out in support of Tony Blair in Britain.

Herr Grass, in interviews to mark his 70th birthday, made clear that his favourite to replace the Chancellor is Oskar Lafontaine, the Social Democrat chairman. He added that with the other Social Democratic contender, Gerhard Schröder, the Lower Saxony premier, "I would have more problems".

Prodi calls Blair to make Cup peace

BY RICHARD OWEN

ITALIAN officials yesterday moved to defuse the row over the policing of last Saturday's World Cup qualifying match, saying a "very friendly" telephone call between Tony Blair and Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister, had "closed the episode".

But Francesco Rutelli, the Mayor of Rome, fuelled the controversy by saying that allegations of police brutality were "absolutely false". Giorgio Napolitano, the Interior Minister, insisted that the police intervened "with great professionalism and sense of duty" to uphold public order.

A spokesman for Signor Prodi said the Prime Minister had invited Mr Blair to come to Italy to see a football match as part of the fence-mending. The two leaders had agreed that neither the hooliganism nor the police reaction "must be allowed in any way to damage the good relations between our two countries".

Summit to build on trade rise

By MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

COMMONWEALTH trade now constitutes 20 per cent of global trade and is growing. Chief Emeke Anyaoku, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, said yesterday. Investment in Commonwealth countries is rising.

In a report to be presented to the 54 Commonwealth heads of government at their Edinburgh summit on October 24, Chief Anyaoku said the growing trade links were making countries reassess the value of Commonwealth membership and look at ways of building on these links.

But he said special measures were still needed to help the poorest countries adjust to the new global environment. The Commonwealth will hold a business forum in London for two days before the summit, at which Chief Anyaoku said measures to boost Commonwealth trade, investment and co-operation would be identified.

The summit would look also at how the Harare principles on good government and democracy could be strengthened and enforced. A ministerial task force will report on the three countries with military Governments — The Gambia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The heads are likely to continue suspension of the last two.

London Jew sues Swiss over death of parents

FROM PETER CAPELLA
IN GENEVA

A BRITISH man has lodged an unprecedented claim for damages from the Swiss Government to compensate for the death of his parents, Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution who were turned back from Switzerland in 1942 and later died in Auschwitz.

Charles Sonabend, 67, a London businessman, is demanding SwFr100,000 (£44,000) from the Swiss authorities under the "Law of Responsibility", which allows individuals to make liability claims against public officials.

It is the first time anyone has taken legal action in Switzerland because of the country's wartime policy. In 1942 the Swiss authorities closed the door on Jewish refugees, leaving many of the 30,000 people it turned back to face Nazi death camps.

The lawsuit could prompt more individual claims from relatives of Holocaust victims, adding a new dimension to the pressure on Switzerland to account for its dealings with



Mr Sonabend, claiming liability by Swiss officials

Nazi Germany. The Swiss cabinet, the Federal Council, which rules directly on cases of political responsibility, is expected to deliver a verdict on Mr Sonabend's case before the end of the year.

Marc Richter, a Zurich-based lawyer acting for Mr Sonabend, said he would use his right of appeal to the Supreme Court if the claim was rejected. However, he acknowledged that several legal

hurdles still had to be cleared.

Mr Richter said formal apologies for Switzerland's wartime refugee policy, made in 1995 and earlier this year, had opened the way for legal action. "Until now, anyone would have said there was no way you could win such a case here," Mr Richter said.

Switzerland started this month to make goodwill payments to elderly Holocaust

survivors from a SwFr270 million (£118 million) special fund but they are not related to specific cases or necessarily linked to Switzerland. The compensation sought by Mr Sonabend, SwFr50,000 for each of his parents, is the maximum allowed under a fixed scale for personal injury and death.

His family's fate is well documented, mainly by Swiss historians. Mr Sonabend, his sister and parents were arrested in a small town near the border on August 14, 1942 after they had fled from Belgium, and were later expelled to Nazi-occupied France.

Simon Sonabend, the father, sold Swiss watches in Brussels before the war and made frequent trips to Switzerland. The Swiss Watchmakers Federation supported his family's asylum claim and offered financial guarantees but to little effect.

The day before they arrived in northern Switzerland, Heinrich Rothmund, the federal police chief, ordered border guards to turn back new Jewish refugees.



Charles Sonabend with his parents and sister Sabine, who survived

Fears of Arab backlash over killer's release

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ARAB-ISRAELI tension rose yesterday after a surprise announcement that Israel was to free a Jewish American gunman who in 1982 killed one Palestinian worshipper and wounded 30 others near al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, the third holiest Islamic shrine.

Alan Goodman, 53, went on a rampage on Easter Sunday 15 years ago, opening fire indiscriminately at Muslims at prayer. He claimed he was trying to return the Temple Mount to Jews, for whom the site is also holy.

His attack ignited weeks of Palestinian unrest in which four Arabs were killed. Last night, Arab sources expressed fears that similar anger could erupt over the decision to cut eight years off his 24-year sentence after the killer agreed to leave Israel and live in the United States for the remaining years of his term. He was originally sentenced to life plus 20 years for murder and attempted murder. This was later cut to 24 years.

Palestinian officials questioned the wisdom of the decision in the light of Goodman's subsequent refusal to show any remorse. In Muslim eyes he has been demonised

just as Baruch Goldstein, the US-born Jewish settler who killed 29 Palestinians praying at the disputed Cave of Machpela in Hebron in 1994.

In the same year Goodman told *Maariv* newspaper that he was not sorry for the shootings. He said: "I do not regret it. Why should I be sorry, I didn't kill Jews, right?" Goodman, like Goldstein — who was killed by some of his intended victims — became a hero among extremist Jews.

The Prison Authority said yesterday: "He came up for parole after serving two-thirds of his sentence. The board offered to release him if he agreed to spend the next eight years outside of Israel. This is not a deportation, it is an agreement."

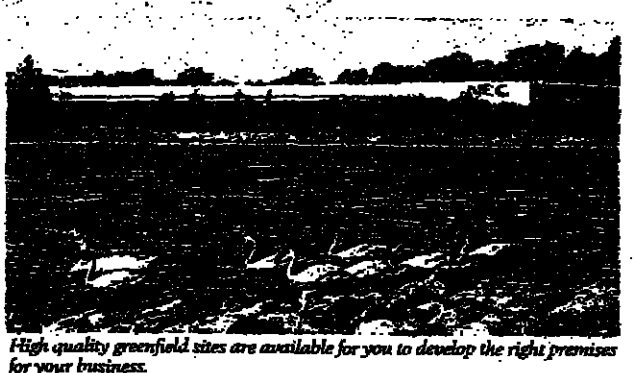
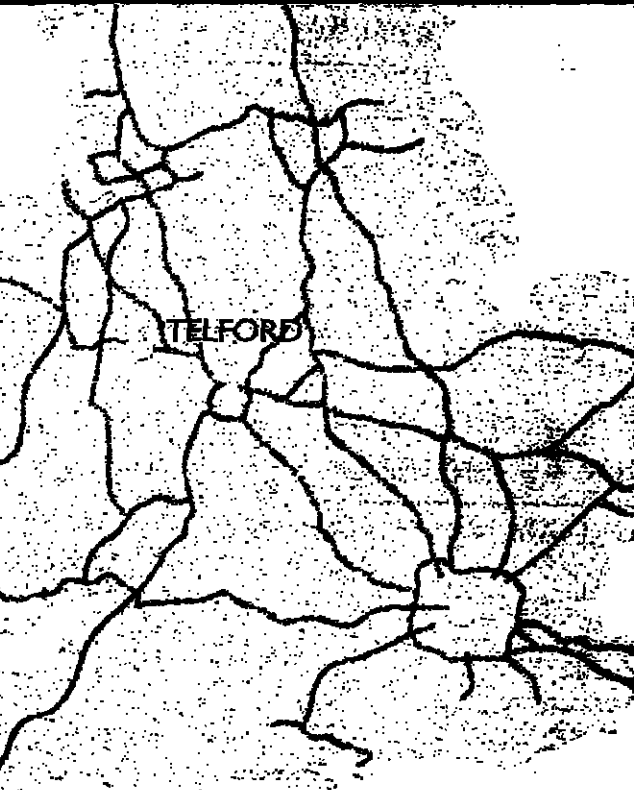
In Palestinian circles, his release was seen as a bid by the right-wing Government of Benjamin Netanyahu to mollify the Jewish right-wing infuriated by the release of 70 Palestinian prisoners and Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. They were freed as the price for getting back two Mossad agents who were arrested in Jordan after a bungled assassination attempt.

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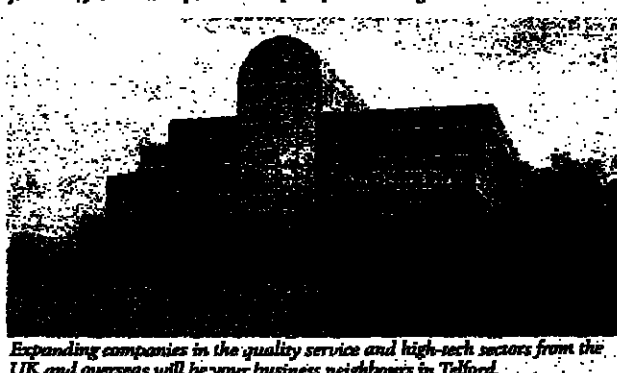
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THE SUNDAY



Seats empty as Major lectures on 'success'

TO THE tune of a brass band, John Major has attempted the feat of launching himself as both a global statesman and a celebrity "motivator" on the lucrative American public-speaking circuit. His debut was not a crowd-puller on either count.

In his first high-profile foreign speech since losing office, the MP for Huntingdon addressed an emptying 14,000-seat arena in Denver and confessed he was "not sure what my predecessors would have made of it".

He spoke of "Pin the Younger's fondness for port as an antidote to stress, and declared: "I know exactly how he felt." He held forth on Chinese economic growth and on the unwrapping of the Russian enigma. He even heaped praise on the Rolling Stones' latest concert tour.

But the speech will be remembered longer for its time and place than for its content. Five months after leading the Conservatives to the worst British election defeat since 1906, Mr Major chose to make his American



The MP for Huntingdon proves a crowd-disperser on the US public speaking circuit. Giles Whittell finds in Denver

comeback at an enormous self-realisation seminar entitled "Success '97".

The venue was the home of the deeply unsuccessful Denver Nuggets, a basketball team that lost 61 of its 82 games last year. Seats ranged in price from \$49 (£30) to \$225, but by the time the former Prime Minister spoke, sandwiched between an "anti-diet guru" and a bewhiskered marketing entrepreneur, who vowed "I'm here to make you money", nearly two thirds of those seats were empty.

Parts of the 25-minute talk were meant for a different audience anyway. For his landslide defeat in May, Mr Major offered a neat explanation. "It was emphatically not the economy stupid," he said, borrowing a phrase from the 1992 US presidential election.

"Britain's was the best-performing, most competitive economy in Europe."

He called close British ties to Europe a mere "geographical necessity" next to the "relationship of the heart" between Britain and America.

Mr Major then returned obediently to the subject of success. Achieving it depended on hard work, courage, good fortune "and quite possibly seminars like this", he said. He bravely reminded the organisers that he had, in fact, known more failure than success in 1997, though he need not have bothered.

Denver's McNicholls Arena was an irony-free zone. "To be Prime Minister is a tremendous accomplishment," said Peter Lowe, who pays former world leaders from \$30,000 to \$60,000 to appear at his day-

long motivational marathons. "Failure" only deepens his message.

Others attending agreed. "It's not the things that happen to you, it's how you deal with them that makes you successful," said Angi Runyon, a sales executive in a \$225 seat paid for by her company. Another added pithily: "I saw more spunk in him here than on the floor of Parliament."

Few audience members said that they would have come just to hear Mr Major, however, and some admitted they did not know who he was. The main attractions were Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State, who gave a warning that all English accents were faked to intimidate Americans; Barbara Bush, the former First Lady, who was rapturously greeted over the Beach Boys' *Let's Go Surfin' Now*; and Christopher Reeve, the paralysed actor, who has become a regular at such events in his pursuit of funds for spinal injury research.

All three spoke to full houses. By Mr Major's turn the audience were making for their cars to avoid being stuck in traffic, one of Mr Lowe's publicists explained.

Mr Major appeared untroubled. "Do I look crushed?" he asked in the green room afterwards. The question had been about the election, but the answer was "no" anyway. Instead, he has enjoyed visiting the Rockies, fraternising backstage with the Rolling Stones and going to opera and theatre.

"I know it's been fashionable over the last few years to say all this guy's interested in is politics, football, cricket and rugby," he said. "But there are a lot more interests in my life, and I shall pursue them with my extra leisure."



Sharing a stage in Denver to speak on the theme of "success" — John Major, Barbara Bush, former First Lady, and Christopher Reeve, the paralysed actor

Clinton dances to rhythm of Rio's slums

FROM GABRIELLA GAMINI IN RIO DE JANEIRO

PRESIDENT CLINTON rolled up his shirt sleeves and abandoned protocol to get a taste of Brazilian street culture during a five-hour visit to Rio de Janeiro yesterday.

He played football with the football hero Pele and tapped his feet to samba

tunes played by children in one of the biggest slums. Hundreds of Brazilian troops, US agents and sharpshooters stationed on dozens of hillside slums watched cautiously as Mr Clinton and the First Lady toured a sporting complex built for deprived children beside the Mangueira shanty town, where more than 100,000 people live in makeshift shacks.

Rio's slums or favelas are notorious for

being crime-ridden because they are controlled by gun-carrying drug gangs who hide their illegal trade in the shacks perched on steep hillsides. This is where the city's poor population of more than two million live.

Police raided the Mangueira favela before the Clintons' visit, confiscating several dozen machineguns and handgrenades used by the drug-traffickers.

Perfect launch for space odyssey to Saturn

BY NIGEL HAWKES SCIENCE EDITOR

THE Saturn-bound spacecraft Cassini was successfully launched on its seven-year odyssey yesterday.

The second attempt to launch the spacecraft, described as the last of the great interplanetary probes, went faultlessly. High winds and technical hitches had prevented the launch on Monday.

Scientists and engineers cheered and cheered when Cassini left Earth's orbit 40 minutes after lift-off and streaked at nearly 25,000 mph towards Venus and ultimately Saturn.

"It's beautiful," said Charles Kohlhaase, Cassini's science and mission design manager. "We've waited a long time for this."

Cassini carries several plutonium-powered generators to keep it alive in the depths of space. Environmentalists had given a warning that the 72lb of plutonium might escape in the event of the rocket failing, but officials from the US space agency, Nasa, insisted that it would be safe because of the many precautions taken.

"We're all very excited. We knew there wouldn't be a problem," said the Energy Department's Beverly Cook, who is in charge of Cassini's nuclear load.

"But we were prepared — it's designed for accidents. There wasn't going to be a safety problem." Cassini's \$3.4 billion (£2.1 billion) mission will not begin to produce scientific results until it reaches Saturn in 2004.

The route involves close passes with Venus (twice), Earth and Jupiter. When it passes within 500 miles of Earth in 1999, anti-Cassini campaigners can be expected to make their voices heard again, but Dr Cook said there is a less than one-in-one million chance that the probe would re-enter Earth's atmosphere.



A Titan AB rocket lifts off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying the Saturn-bound Cassini craft

Law puts paid to the din of New Yorkers

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

ONE of the most noisy, clamorous, screaming, strident, ear-splitting cities on earth is about to become a little bit quieter. Sick of the daily cacophony that assaults New Yorkers, the city council has voted to introduce swingeing new fines for noise-makers.

By the end of this month, the owners of drills, radios, cars, air conditioners, barking dogs, motorcycles and booming bars will all make a nuisance of themselves at their own financial peril.

By 44 votes to four, the council has decided to double existing fines for second-time offenders, and to treble the fines for those who think that twice is not enough.

"New York City is never going to be a sleepy town where you hear the crickets chirping," said a councillor, Gifford Miller, who introduced the anti-noise Bill and help to draft it with the Department of Environmental Protection. "But I think we can make it a little quieter, a little saner."

Under the new regime, the owner of a noisy dog could be fined up to \$525 (£325) for failing to silence the animal. Playing a stereo system too loudly could cost up to \$1,050; unlawful use of a car horn could cost an offender \$2,625.

A car alarm which does not stop blaring within three minutes could cost the vehicle's owner up to \$2,100.

Bars and discos have the most to fear from the new punishment. A third offence by a noisy bar will result in a whopping \$24,000 fine. This is designed to out-manoeuvre those commercial establishments which "factor in" the present flat-rate fine of \$8,000 as a cost of doing business.

Not surprisingly, the new fines have been criticised by the New York Nightlife Association, a coalition of about 50 licensed cabaret and music clubs. Robert Bookman, their lawyer, said: "There has to be a certain amount of tolerance to industries which are important to New York's economy."

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Democracy's dear to us, Mr Dewar

Parliament belongs in Edinburgh, not Leith, says Magnus Linklater

Would it matter if the House of Commons were moved from Westminster to Docklands? Would the quality of democracy suffer? It might seem unthinkable to toss aside 700 years of parliamentary history, to remove the people's forum from the heart of the capital. On the other hand, one can think of some powerful arguments in favour. It would transform the inner-city environment, drawing London traffic away from the centre; it would be a healthy boost for economic development; it would allow a building fit for the 21st century rather than the cramped, archaic premises in which our MPs struggle to carry out their daily business.

This is the kind of debate that has been dividing Scotland over the past few weeks. The decision about the exact site for a new Scottish parliament is fast approaching, and the outcome is finely balanced. The letters columns of the Scottish papers are full of it. Fervent meetings of conservation societies have taken place. Lobbying is furious. At the centre of it all is the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, his brow more furrowed than

likely to cost less than converting the Calton Hill site. The advice from civil servants was to go for Leith, and Mr Dewar seemed on the point of making his announcement. But then, like a grumbling giant, the Scottish public — or rather the letter-writing public — began to wake up and take notice. Why Leith? Did the Scottish people really want a Parliament that was out of sight and out of mind? Surely a parliament should be visible, responsive, immediately accessible. The city council weighed in, Edinburgh's influential civic groups expressed opposition. A third site, near Haymarket, emerged. And Mr Dewar stayed his hand.

Encouragingly, the argument now revolves not purely around the dry issues of cost-benefit or economic regeneration, but the character and purpose of a parliament. Attention has once again focused on Calton Hill because it is such a compelling site, dominating the East End of the City, a counterpart to Edinburgh Castle at the other end of Princes Street. "It is the spiritual home of a parliament," said one conservationist I spoke to.

The building is too small and cramped — most commentators now accept that. But opposite is the remarkable building which houses the Scottish Office — St Andrew's House, designed in the 1930s by Thomas Tait and a splendid example of imperial architecture. Much thought has gone into linking these two buildings, possibly by means of a tunnel, possibly by closing off the under-used road that bisects them and constructing a linking structure. The city council has commissioned a feasibility study which envisages glassing over its spacious courtyard and making it a debating chamber. Mr Dewar is against this, but other suggestions have surfaced. Personally I favour the Greenside site around the corner, an unused area of Calton Hill overlooking Queen Street. And if, at the same time, they demolished the 1960s concrete St James's Centre opposite, all Edinburgh would raise a cheer.

Why not allow time for a full appraisal of options?

For almost a decade there has only been one possible choice: the great pillared Royal High School on Calton Hill overlooking Arthur's Seat, designed by the 19th-century architect Thomas Hamilton and modelled on the Greek temple of Theseus. It was always destined to be the Scottish parliament — whenever that came about. But as reality approached, hard questions began to be asked. Was it not too small, too cramped, too confrontational an amphitheatre for the new model parliament we were all told to expect? The chamber was like a cockpit. Other facilities were hopelessly antiquated. It was an argument I raised in these columns. Soon afterwards it emerged that Labour ministers were looking elsewhere. No connection, I am sure.

Their eye fell on the port of Leith, once Edinburgh's gateway to the Continent, now a mini-Docklands, much refurbished with fashionable restaurants, warehouses converted to unmarket apartments, and little to suggest that it was the setting for *Trainspotting* except for the prostitutes who still patrol its meaner streets. There was much to be said for it. The Scottish Office was recently relocated there. A "greenfield" site was offered, and there was much talk of a "waterfront" building — something like the Sydney Opera House, who knows? And didn't Mary of Guise move the seat of government to Leith in 1548?

Above all, it was cheap. The devolution White Paper had specified a price of "between £10 million and £30 million" and a new building seemed

discuss. So far the running in being made by heavily vested commercial interests, offering tempting inducements for both Leith and Haymarket. That is not the basis on which a final choice should be made. And in the end, is Mr Dewar the man to decide? After all, the "client body", as one architect described it, is the Scottish parliament itself. Instead of rushing to complete the building by the millennium, why not allow time for a full appraisal of all the options, accepting that the parliament might open in temporary accommodation while the final site is being prepared? When Venice commissioned the church of Santa Maria della Salute to commemorate the plague of 1630, it took 57 years to complete. But it was half a building to be proud of.



Yanks and Limeys

Anglophilia is still alive: the special relationship is cultural, not political

When Henry James became a member of the Reform Club, he wrote home to his family in Boston with the excited exclamation: "J'y suis. J'y suis, forever and a day." Henry James is the classic example of the American Anglophile. He lived mainly in England for the second half of his life; he actually became a British citizen shortly before his death in order to affirm his loyalty to Britain in the Great War.

This year Joseph Epstein, the American man of letters, gave the Cleanth Brooks lecture on American literature and culture to the Institute of United States Studies in the University of London. The title of his lecture was "Anglophilia, American-style" and he quoted the example of Henry James. He is himself a long-standing Anglophile. The England he admires is that of the historical culture and of his youth in the 1940s and 1950s; it is interesting to note the qualities he finds most attractive:

Kenneth Tynan claimed that Noel Coward was, for the modern era, the inventor of the cool. It was Noel Coward who, at being greatly flattered before his 70th birthday, after receiving handsome toasts from Laurence Olivier and the Earl of Mountbatten, remarked: "I am awfully overrated at this moment and, as you can see, restraining it with splendid fortitude." English cool has always seemed impressive to Americans, certainly to the Anglophiles among us. It is represented by Evelyn Waugh stepping out of a bunker during a Nazi bombing raid in Yugoslavia, looking up at the sky raining down bombs and announcing: "Like all things German, this is vastly overdone." Funnier than either of these remarks is Max Beerbohm's put-down of Freud. When asked his opinion of Freud's theory, he commented: "A sense and pacific family, the Oedipus."

Joseph Epstein's judgment is that "only an Englishman would have chosen that lovely, comic, absolutely on-target sentence." It is pleasant to be congratulated on this coolness and therefore on the modernity of English humour, particularly on the humour of a period which is still unfashionable.

I cannot help noticing, however, the extent to which this detached irony belongs to the tradition of high camp; if not actually gay, it has a gay style. The names quoted are high-camp names: Tynan, Coward, Olivier, Mountbatten, Waugh, Beerbohm. Their jokes are the stylistic godchildren of Oscar Wilde, who adds an

Irish element. The characteristic tone of English humour — clipped, ironic, fantastic — seems to owe an equal debt to the Irish and to the gay. Certainly our national humour cannot be divorced from its Irish ancestry in Swift, Goldsmith, Sheridan, Wilde and Shaw.

Anglophile Americans can, however, see even more substantial virtues in the English than dry jokes or Cary Grant's gift of looking at home in a dinner jacket. Joseph Epstein says things that the English could not and would not say about themselves:

My first, still strong, experience of history was that of World War II. This was the war, as I shall always think of it, won by the English. "The stolid English" who, in Primo Levi's words, "had not noticed that they had lost the game." Two years old when it began and eight when it ended, I then saw World War II as I continue to see it today, as the good war, the war without moral equivocation. And its outcome was owed to English righteousness, endurance and courage.

Just as there are still Anglophile Americans, there are also Anglophile English people. Baroness Thatcher prominent among them. The two nations have always valued, or disliked, each other for different qualities. The great English cultural export has always been literature — Tokyo had two replicas of Elizabethan theatres before London, under the impulse of an American, built the Globe. The great American cultural export has been the cinema. Some of its film stars have not been American: Greto Garbo and Ingrid Bergman were Swedish and Marlene Dietrich was German. Bob Hope and Cary Grant went to America from England as children. Even Fred Astaire was born in Austria in the engaging name of Friedrich Austerlitz. Yet the impact of Hollywood is a wholly American impact.

Old English literature and early Hollywood both provided heroic role models. As a child in the Chicago of the 1940s, Joseph Epstein rather

touchingly found some of his role models in Dickens:

Christmas, as I understood it, was practically invented by Charles Dickens. Dickens, too, in *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*, taught the poignant conditions of poverty and of being orphaned. He also taught one to have great expectations. And once again, heroism: "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever known."

Some Hollywood role models did show the elegant courage of Sydney Carton facing the guillotine, more

often and more interestingly they were of the type of the western hero, the strong man who stands for law and order in an anarchic society, or the urban hero, the tough guy with a core of honour, such as Bogart or Cagney in their positive roles.

The power of *Casablanca* lies in its morality. Americans have been attracted to English culture by its historical depth and complexity; the English have been attracted to American culture by its vitality. My favourite English novel of the 20th century is *Brideshead Revisited*; my favourite American novel is *The Great Gatsby* — both simple choices and popular favourites. Both novels deal with class, but they represent the appeal of different cultures.

Modern Anglophilia and Americanophilia appear to be in a regrettable decline. English culture has lost much of its self-confidence. Epstein quotes a passage from George Santayana, written as long ago as 1950: "Her kings were half-ashamed to be kings, her liberals were half-ashamed to be liberals, her Church was half-ashamed to be Protestant. All became a medley of sweet reasonableness, stupidity and confusion."

Though still near the height of its power, America has the feeling of mid-afternoon; so recently it still seemed to be morning. Hollywood has gone the way of English literature: there is a subtlety of despair.

Yet in neither country has the love for the culture of the other wholly

disappeared. In Britain there is a regrettable ignorance of American history — the average Englishman knows the name of only one 18th-century American president, George Washington, and one from the 19th century, Abraham Lincoln. The Institute of United States Studies is fighting this ignorance: Paul Johnson has written an heroic one-volume *History of the American People*. With the Institute, *The Times* and Dillons Bookshop are hosting a forum on the book next Monday, October 20 (telephone 0171-467 1613 for details). Among the speakers will be Lord Renwick and Gavin Esler. But the ignorance will still be there, and indeed most Americans are equally ill-informed about English history.

Yet the United States still has a gravitational pull. We are always being told how European the under-30 generation is in this country. It may be so, but it is even more American. It shares with America a common music, films, social patterns, even the Internet. There are always plenty of young Americans in London and young Englishmen and women in New York; they mix without consciousness of the national difference. A young German, even with perfect English, seems much more foreign in either city.

Epstein concludes his lecture by recognising the partial fading of the Anglophile dream. Inevitably, culture relates to a nation's power:

That greatest of British ambassadors, English literature, shows signs of beginning to fade. "Georgetown University's abandonment of the requirement that English majors study at least two authors among Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton..." *The New York Times* recently reported, "is now the norm, a new study by the National Alumni Forum finds." In the assault of multiculturalism, all of English culture can easily be portrayed as one large, dead, white European male.

This assault on the historical culture is being made on both sides of the Atlantic. What is the gain and loss if the English and Americans have the Beatles in common, but have both lost John Milton? William Shakespeare is still holding his own, in Hollywood as in London. Perhaps *Paradise Lost* has become as obscure to both modern nations as the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid* on which it was modelled. Yet Americans still find depth in the culture of England and the English still find dynamism in that of America. Neither Anglophilia nor Americanophilia is dead.

William Rees-Mogg

No such thing as a free euro

John Redwood on the dangers for business of EMU

Some large companies dream of a perfect world: one where there are no barriers across frontiers, where there is no risk of foreign exchange losses, where European demand pours straight into orders and profits for their factories. If only such a world could exist, I would have loved such a world when I chaired a PLC.

They tried to create it with the exchange rate mechanism. The idea was that currencies came closer and closer together, until there would be one single rate that always applied. Unfortunately there was no right rate for sterling to join. As a DTT minister, I told business delegations before we went in that it would all end in tears. If you controlled exchange rates, you could not control interest rates. So it proved. What businesses gained on exchange risk, they lost many times over in higher borrowing costs and fewer orders.

Now I find myself drawing on my industrial, commercial and Government experience of the 1980s and 1990s to warn business again: this time of the dangers of the single currency. They tell me it is different from the ERM. So it is: it is an ERM that you cannot leave easily: an ERM the markets cannot save you from.

For bigger businesses, there will be a small saving on converting their money across Europe — but there will still be wild swings on the exchanges into dollars and yen. They will discover that a single currency with France and Germany is not all it's cracked up to be. The enthusiasts say the trouble with the ERM was that we went in at the wrong rate. A pity they did not warn us at the time. And what is the right rate now? Most big businesses which want a single currency argue that the present exchange rate is not the right one. How would they find the right one, and how would we get sterling down to that rate?

The Government's indecision is making a mockery in the markets. Huge sums are being invested in the belief that we will go in. Another day, huge sums are taken out in the belief that we will not. Speculators are making a killing out of all the rumours. The market goes up when they think we might join. With French and German interest rates so much lower than ours, the market gets excited at the thought of our rates coming down if we joined up.

There is no free lunch. Our rates are higher because our economy is doing so much better. Our unemployment is half the French and German levels. If we did slash our rates to their level, we would have to impose much higher taxes to stop our economy blowing the roof off. There would be far too much money in circulation, house prices would surge, markets would go giddy, and then there would be a crash.

Has Gordon Brown thought about the problems it is causing for the local shop? If we are to join with the other countries, the shopkeeper has to be ready with two tills for January 1, 2002, to take either euros or pounds. He has to change over all his accounts; and be ready to double his prices. For the rest of us, it will mean shopping in a foreign currency, with no sense of monetary values.

And what about the local amusement arcade, or Blackpool pleasure beach? Every coin-operated machine or ride will have to be changed. The council will have to alter all its car park machines, the bank cash dispensers will need replacing, every business counting money by machine will need new equipment. Decimalisation was easy in comparison.

Yet Mr Brown and Mr Blair cannot get around to telling us whether this is a good idea or not, if we are to be ready for 2002. Businesses have to spend money now, to plan, and to order all the machinery they will need. It is a massive £10 billion outlay for British business as a whole to get ready.

And what is it all for? For smaller businesses — the bulk of our companies — it produces no saving. It is all expense. They do not deal in marks or francs. Vauxhall will not close its Luton plant if we stay out. It might "lose" its European profits altogether if we plough on with a currency that does not work.

I am glad that the CBI and business groups now want an informed debate about the euro. I quite understand that many businessmen do not wish to be immersed in fundamental arguments about self-government and constitutional change. There is plenty to debate with business about the impact that a single currency would have on the balance sheets and profit-and-loss accounts of individual companies.

A new consensus has emerged in the Conservative Party, uniting William Hague, myself, John Major and Ken Clarke. We all agree that entry now, at this exchange rate and in the different economic circumstances of Britain, France and Germany, would be bad for British business. We must now persuade all of British business that on this occasion, the majority view in Britain is right. We must force this Government off the fence so that business knows where it stands.

The author is the Shadow Trade and Industry Secretary.

Too tacky

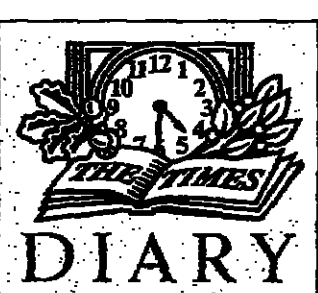
THE DINGY interior of Tony Blair's Downing Street residence is to receive a makeover. This will include new furniture and wallpapering and is to be assisted by Lady Powell, the wife of Baroness Thatcher's former foreign policy adviser, Sir Charles, and sister-in-law of the Prime Minister's chief of staff, Jonathan Powell.

The decor in the flat above No 11 is as outmoded as old Labour: brown viscose sofa-covers, grubby carpets, that sort of thing — far too crusty for the sleek standards of new Labour types. Carla Powell, a ferocious socialite who slips with admirable ease between the salons of Left and Right, has discussed the matter with Cherie Booth. A frequent face at the Blair's dinner table, she has persuaded Cherie that something must be done.

There is, however, a delicate matter to be resolved: who pays. The Cabinet Office accepts the need for redecoration, but it might not stretch to the exacting demands of the two women.

The four-bedroom flat, which is home to the Blair's three children, Euan, 13, Nicholas, 11, and Kathryn, 9, hovers above the offices of the Chancellor at Number 11, as the Number 10 flat is too small. And it was next door that Carla first touted her decorating skills. She advised Margaret Thatcher on important issues such as hearth-rugs and coffee tables. Her legacy can be seen on the third floor of No 10, where she installed two marble pillars. Yesterday she was in Egypt, no doubt scouring bazaars for Beduin oddities.

HE WAS the last sceptic. Humphrey, the Prime Ministerial cat.



has been absent from No 10 since his old friend John Major lost the election. He, at least, was holding out against the universal adoration for new Labour. No longer. Earlier this week he popped into the Cabinet Office, enjoyed a glass of milk and made himself at home by a radiator. Seasoned observers, though, interpret this not as a political conversion but as a self-serving exercise. "During summer he loves prowling St James's Park," says a top hound in Whitehall. "The first sign of winter and he is here sharp. It's time for thermals."

Un-manored

PIERS MERCHANT'S belated resignation has cost a senior Labour politician his job. Bryan Gould, who gave up his seat following his unsuccessful leadership bid in

1994, will have to give up his title of Crown Steward and Bailiff of the Manor of Northstead — one of two archaic 17th-century sinecures that MPs apply for in order to become disqualified from political office. Neil Kinnock currently holds the title of Crown Steward and Bailiff of the Chiltern Hundreds.

Speaking from his home in New Zealand, where he has borrowed into academia. Gould admits to "a sense of great deprivation" at the loss of this title. Nobly he "hopes that Mr Merchant enjoys the position as much as I have".



UH OH. Tony Banks has been talking again. An interview has come my way that Banks granted to a student magazine at his alma mater, York University. Of his sex life at college, he was frank — too frank for your sensibilities, I fear, dear reader, but you will get the drift when I record his remark: "It was very permissive, in sexual terms, without any doubt at all. I must confess that my sex life was certainly more interesting than perhaps it has been in recent years." More interesting is his comment on new Labour: "We have connived. We have gone along with the party shifting to the right, in desperation to win an election. That's what that nice Mr Mandelson calls going 'off message'."

Who's she?

FED UP with the world of academe, the daughter of the rock star Pete Townshend is following her father into the music business. Emma Townshend, 28, has abandoned a PhD in history at King's College, Cambridge, to record her first single, *The Last Time I Saw Sadie*, due to be released in January. Little credit can be claimed by her father. "My parents were hopeless at making me go to piano lessons," Ms Townshend says. "My dad was really upset when I



Rock chick: Emma Townshend

started going. He'd say 'Oh, but you used to play such beautiful abstract pieces'." Currently holed away writing his life story, her father nonetheless manages a compliment. "Emma has a beautiful voice," he wheezes from his study, "so dynamic."

JASPER GERARD



Mistress of style: Lady Powell



A GUEST IN INDIA

The Government in Delhi has let down its people

There is an ancient Indian saying that "a guest is dearer than all". Two years before the Queen's state visit to India and Pakistan was entered in her diary, the governments of both countries were carefully sounded out as to whether a royal visit to mark the 50th anniversary of their independence would be welcomed. Every detail was, as it always is, meticulously planned in London, Islamabad and Delhi. The careful symmetry between her engagements in each country was designed to avoid the least occasion for offence — as was the decision to visit Pakistan first and India second, reversing the order of her previous state visit in 1961.

At Amritsar, the most delicate of the Queen's engagements, it took sensitivity on both sides to reconcile royal protocol with respect for the victims of the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The city's people responded in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, showing their readiness to emphasise the ties that bind rather than past bitterness. By abruptly announcing that the Queen is debarred by protocol from speaking at a state banquet in Madras given by the Governor of Tamil Nadu state, India's Government has shown considerably less maturity.

After the intricate prior planning that goes into such visits, confusion over the exchange of toasts is barely conceivable, but it is not impossible. Tamil Nadu, a populous state that zealously guards its substantial degree of autonomy, might not have cleared the arrangements with Delhi, as palace officials would have assumed. It is also possible that Tamil Nadu did not believe this to be necessary; Delhi's allegedly iron rule of protocol, which runs contrary to the spirit of India's federal constitution by in effect stating that there is no India outside Delhi, has a freshly minted look about it.

Whatever the truth, protocol is a combination of tradition and commonsense and if the Indian Government wished the Queen to

feel truly welcome, the right course would have been to have overlooked so minor a matter when raising it was certain to embarrass. This unnecessary episode has Kashmir, not protocol, written all over it.

The Indian Prime Minister, I. K. Gujral, has encountered fierce criticism from Indian nationalists ever since agreeing with Pakistan last summer to open negotiations on "all outstanding issues" between the two countries, including Kashmir. With tension high over the past month after renewed fighting on the Kashmir "line of control", Robin Cook's raising of the subject in Pakistan was particularly unfortunate. But the Queen's comportment has been faultless.

When she spoke in Pakistan of lifting the historical barriers between the two countries, it was in the spirit of unleashing the region's potential. She spoke of the pleasure that efforts this year to start bilateral talks on "contentious issues" gave to "the friends of both". There was no hint of preaching, still less of British involvement, and no word of Kashmir. In the subcontinent, these are sentiments shared by business, those with families on both sides of the border, and many others, particularly among the young. Whatever pro-Pakistan bias Delhi may suspect in the Labour Government — and Indian politicians have exaggerated Mr Cook's mistake for domestic consumption — the Queen should not have been made a target.

India has begun in recent years to shed the contentious, prickly attitude to this country that made it a stereotype of postcolonial insecurities, just as it is casting off the red tinge that has held back its economic potential. By departing from the courtesies to a guest that are central not only to secular good manners but to India's deeply rooted cultural and religious traditions, his Government has slipped back into habits of awkwardness that Indians and the world believed that it had outgrown.

IRELAND NEEDS ALLIES

A new economic challenge for Blair in Europe

When is a tax not a tax? As far as the European Commission seem to be concerned, when it is levied in Ireland. For the competition Commissioner Karel Van Miert a tax pitched too low can be seen as a subsidy. He is currently exercised by the low level of corporation tax levied in the Irish Republic and has told the Irish Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevy, that its tax structure may be treated as a "state aid". The commissioner is considering penalising Ireland for its reluctance to burden business. Mr Van Miert, rightly, has been a scourge of subsidy but it is grotesque to punish the European Union's second most liberal economy in this way. Not only is it unfair on Ireland, it sets an unhappy precedent for European Union intervention in the fiscal freedom of member states. The Irish should not be left to fight this battle on their own.

Ireland's evolution from honorary member of the EC's Olive Belt to Celtic Tiger has taken place because of a variety of factors, not least the energy of its people and the quality of the State's education; but a liberal tax regime for business has been crucial. Ireland has a standard corporation tax rate of 38 per cent but in several sectors, such as manufacturing and international financial services, the rate is only 10 per cent. The ultra-competitive tax regime has attracted significant investment to Ireland. Other EU countries, notably Germany, have waxed indignant at Ireland's audacity in creating growth by cutting taxes. The Commission has been persuaded to question Ireland's "discriminatory" fiscal stance which other nations fear is slanted to securing footloose firms while milking less mobile parts of the domestic economy.

There is a principled case for defending the freedom of states to discriminate within

tax regimes, a case that should not be lost on a UK Government that levies VAT on fuel at a lower rate than on other products. The Irish, nevertheless, have been prepared to listen to others' objections and to set a uniform rate. Fianna Fail came to power on a manifesto pledge to reduce corporation tax across the board to 10 per cent and, in coalition with the Progressive Democrats, it is determined to establish a "single low rate".

This is still, however, not good enough for the Commission, which wants to stop the exploitation of "predatory" business tax regimes and is pressing for a higher rate. The Commission is attempting to browbeat Ireland into compliance by threatening a cut in EU funding. There is a case, given Ireland's phenomenal growth, for reducing structural funds. It should not be overstated. Other EU countries, such as Germany, operated extravagant state subsidies towards industry which Ireland did not and, moreover, Ireland still has some way to go before its infrastructure is at a level comparable to many other member states.

Whatever the merits of any reduction in funding, however, there can be no logical linkage with the level of corporation tax. Ireland is setting an example other EU states should seek to emulate, not crush. It is not robbing other member states of investment but attracting it from all over the world, in the face of fierce global competition. It is only by allowing member states to establish their own fiscal regimes that EU nations can compete globally and learn, from each other, how best to boost growth. If Tony Blair wants a practical example of how he might lead Europe to a more flexible future he should consider using his forthcoming presidency of the Union to fight Ireland's corner.

SEX AND THE SINGLE SQUID

The terror of the deep is an aphrodisiac for the imagination

The mating habits of politicians are a continual source of sensation. But, as our Science Editor reports, the mating habits of the giant squid are rare and even more sensational. The captures of two pregnant giant squid (*Architeuthis*) off Australia have provided the first record of sex among these almost legendary creatures. On the one hand, they show that there is nothing new under the sun or beneath the sea. But on another hand, they show that they do things differently at 3,000 feet below the surface.

Sperm packages (spermatophores) were found embedded within the skin of the arms of a female. The hypothesis is that a male giant squid injects sperm packages into the arms of the female. Biologists suggest that males use their beaks or the scythe-like hooks on their arms to dig a hole in the females in which to deposit their packages.

Far less is known about the dark courtship rituals of the squid than of those of most forms of life, including MPs. But because it is encountered only occasionally by humans, when washed up or caught in fishermen's nets, the giant squid has a powerful hold on human imagination. In Greek myth Scylla was represented as having 12 feet. Her diet was fish, though she was happy to eat sailors if a ship came by.

The belief in huge, man-eating creatures that inhabited the deep was widespread throughout the ancient world even before Homer steered Odysseus past Scylla's cave.

In the Old Testament Leviathan features as a monstrous primordial enemy of God. And the Babylonian god Marduk's battle with the many-armed sea monster Tiamat is thought to be a precursor of the Christian legend of St George and the dragon.

The grip of the giant squid on the imagination is still strong. It has been a stock sea-horror of fiction from *Moby Dick* and Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, in which a shoal of giant "poups" attack the Nautilus, to Hollywood and television. Tennyson published *The Kraken* when he was 21, and romanced in a letter about "vast and misshapen things, the wonders of the secret deeps, and the serpent, the huge chimera of the north".

Man, the land animal, is still as fascinated as Tennyson by the mysteries of the sea. He may take his revenge by eating small squid cooked in their own ink, but he still knows far less about giant squids than he does about dinosaurs, which have been extinct for at least 65 million years. And in spite of this latest light cast on the mating habits of the giant squid, the creatures retain much of their archetypal myth. For a start, it does not explain the male *Architeuthis* caught off Norway with spermatophores embedded in the skin of several arms and its mantle. Did another male accidentally rivet a rival while they were both trying to impregnate the same female? Or had this male literally shot himself in the foot?

Cook defends his Kashmir talks

From the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary

Sir, If there is a "gaffe" in your reports of the state visit it is in your own curious belief that the Foreign Secretary does not normally hold substantive talks during a state visit (leading article, "Cooking up a storm", October 14; see also letters, October 15).

On the contrary, it is standard procedure for him to do so. In the past half dozen royal visits my predecessors held bilaterals with six foreign ministers, three presidents, two prime ministers and one defence minister. Nor were these merely "courtesy calls".

It would have been a cause of major offence if in both Pakistan and India I had refused to hold meaningful talks with both prime ministers who wanted to do so. Your suggestion that I could have met with the Prime Minister of Pakistan but refused to discuss Kashmir has the ring of Olympian unreality, not least because one of the issues I was anxious to raise was the fate of the two British hostages in Kashmir.

In neither Pakistan nor India did I make any public comment or statement on Kashmir. Nor has Kashmir overshadowed the royal visit or undermined our strong and close relations with India. The immense, welcoming crowds at Amritsar testify to the warmth of feeling between our peoples. In one hour at the Indo-British trade exhibition I witnessed the signing of eight major contracts and joint ventures.

My bilateral meeting and two meals with the Prime Minister of India were as cordial and positive as my exchanges in Pakistan. Among many points of agreement, we resolved to speak regularly by phone and particularly when the press was seeking to cause mischief between us. I fear your own reports underline the wisdom of that agreement.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN COOK,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
London SW1 2AH.
October 15.

Royal visits

From Mr Ivor Lucas

Sir, The contretemps over the royal visit to Pakistan and India (letters, October 15) has a precedent.

In 1961, the last time the Queen was in Pakistan, the country was under Ayub Khan's martial law. We in the British High Commission in Karachi were beavering away drafting speeches for Her Majesty to say that of course we quite understood that the Westminster brand of parliamentary democracy did not suit everyone, and to commend the local version of "basic democracy" which Ayub was then introducing.

Meanwhile our colleagues in Delhi were busy drafting speeches for her to say how wonderful it was that the Indians were maintaining the best traditions of the Mother of Parliaments.

In due course, the Indians were outraged that the Queen should appear to be condoning military dictatorship in the Commonwealth, while the Pakistanis asked whether we really believed that Nehru's India was any more than a one-party state dressed up to look like Westminster-style democracy. However, at least on that occasion we succeeded in offending both sides equally.

Yours faithfully,
IVOR LUCAS,
(First Secretary, Karachi, 1959-62),
65 Newstead Way, SW19.

Dyer at Amritsar

From Mr L. M. Seben

Sir, Your correspondent boldly states in his report today that General Reginald Dyer's action in 1919 "appalled most people". I find this surprising, since shortly afterwards — in a libel action, *O'Dwyer v. Nair* — an English jury vindicated Dyer's action and awarded heavy damages against the defendant for describing the action as "an atrocity".

Indeed, as late as 1956, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* commented in its section on martial law: "Public opinion, when not clouded by political considerations, has entirely endorsed this view and it is widely held that the action of Sir Michael O'Dwyer [the lieutenant governor of the Punjab under whose authority Dyer acted] and General Dyer 'saved India'."

Yours faithfully,
L. M. SEBEN,
35 Church Street,
Saffron Walden, Essex.
October 15.

Quid pro quo?

From Mr Terry L. Johnson

Sir, I cannot resist the temptation to inquire whether the survey of professionals which you mention ("Lawyers lean on expert witnesses", report, October 13, earlier editions) revealed any correlation between the one third of experts who altered their opinions on request, and the 15 per cent who ended up suing the solicitor for their fees?

Yours faithfully,
T. L. JOHNSON,
Johnson & Co (solicitors),
71-75 St Johns, Worcester.
October 15.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Libraries face up to virtual reality

From the Chairman of the British Library

Sir, Your very welcome leader ("The virtual library", October 13) underlines the importance, for the UK's cultural, economic and social life, of making a success of the current plans to link public libraries to the information superhighway.

The British Library has the world's finest collection and is the world's leading resource for scholarship, research and innovation. Our main catalogue, containing almost ten million entries, was put on the Internet this year (<http://lopac97.bl.uk/>) as part of a programme for widening access to our stock.

We are also currently evaluating bids from the private sector for participation in our digital library programme (at approximately £20 million the largest public finance initiative project not to involve funds for a building) so that we will be able to continue to support the public library system.

It is fitting that in the year when we finally come to occupy our magnificent new building at St Pancras we will also take the first steps in our "virtual" existence. Fitting because the virtual and the real (or traditional) library are complementary not competitive ways of accessing information.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN ASHWORTH,
Chairman,
The British Library,
96 Euston Road, NW1.
October 13.

From Mr Richard F. Shepherd

Sir, In my experience the modern public library has shelves full of pulp fiction and videos, and seemingly endless information technology gadgetry which seems to be little used and must absorb inordinate amounts of revenue.

Public libraries need to get back to

basics and concentrate on providing decent books, and I suspect that most of us would be prepared to pay something for that privilege. If local authorities want to provide amusement arcades, they should devise ways of funding them separately.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD SHEPHERD,
Whalecwm House,
Coshston, Pembrokeshire,
October 13.

From Dr Phillip Hallam-Baker

Sir, You state in your leader that the librarian has not become obsolete in the information age. As someone who has spent the past five years helping develop the World Wide Web I very much agree.

A librarian's principal function is to help library users find material. Information technology has thus far been more effective in increasing the supply of information than the ability to use it.

The ability accurately to catalog, index and classify will become at least as important as the ability to write computer programs.

Yours etc,
PHILLIP HALLAM-BAKER,
75 Meridian Street,
Somerville, MA 02143.
hallam@mit.edu
October 13.

From Mrs Peter Ashley Miller

Sir, Your headline (earlier editions, October 11) read "Libraries will put grannies on the Net". This 71-year-old is already "surfing" at Beccles Library. Although older than Her Majesty, I don't feel the world is going too fast. Thanks to Suffolk, I have jumped aboard.

Yours faithfully,
JILL ASHLEY MILLER,
7 Ballygate, Beccles, Suffolk.
October 15.

Loaded lobby voting

From the Earl of Halsbury, FRS, FEng

Sir, Speaking at the end of a debate in the Lords on June 25, I advocated an alternative system of voting in the Commons which, for want of a better name, I shall dub "loaded lobby voting" (LLV).

Assuming a party which attracted, say, 20 per cent of the electors but achieved, say, only 10 per cent of the elected, the latter would be given two votes each in a division. By contrast, if a party achieved 10 per cent of the electorate but a disproportionate 20 per cent of the elected, the elected would be given only half a vote.

How would this be manageable in practice? For security reasons those with a right of entry to the Palace of Westminster carry an identity card

with a magnetic strip, enabling them to unlock doors to which they have right of access. The same card could carry a second strip recording its possessor's voting power, to be presented to and read by a computer coupled to a reading device in the division lobby. Print-out of the result would be at least as fast as anything in use.

LLV could not be applied in the House of Lords, owing to the very large number of crossbenchers there, but no matter. The membership of a revising chamber should be in contrast to that of an elected one, not a reflection thereof. In the Commons it would combine the virtues of both first-past-the-post and proportional representation.

Yours faithfully,
HALSBURY,
House of Lords,
October 2.

Self-assessment

From Mr Martin Cutts

Sir, Attacks on the supposed lack of clarity of the tax self-assessment form (letter, October 9) are misplaced.

The form was thoroughly pre-tested by the Inland Revenue (letter, October 13) and is perhaps the best that could have been devised before evidence of its actual performance in use becomes available. Certainly the form follows most guidelines on plain language and good document design published in the last 20 years.

The real problems are that people dislike paying income tax and filling in forms, and that the last Government decided to make the switch to self-assessment. That switch was ostensibly to cut administrative costs, but merely shifted their burden to individual taxpayers.

We should not expect the form to do what generations of politicians and civil servants have yet to do — simplify the tax system. That the Revenue is

spending about £20 million on rewriting 6,000 pages of tax law into plain language shows the scale of the task.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN CUTTS (Research director),
Plain Language Commission,
The Castle,
29 Stoneheads, Whaley Bridge,
High Peak, Derbyshire.

From Mr Ian M. T. Sandison

Sir, I thought I would try self-assessment. I found it far from easy but the result was that Her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes seemed to owe me £3,000 — or thereabouts.

Though I would have been happy to have been right my financial affairs are very simple and I decided to ask HM/T to do it for me as usual. The result was a refund of £164.60.

Happily I had not spent my wind-fall.

Yours sincerely,
IAN SANDISON,
Planton, Kierriemuir, Angus.

Church heritage

From Miss Fay Wilson-Rudd

Sir, As one who has worked extensively throughout Somerset helping parishes to raise vast sums of money to restore many of our splendid buildings, I share the concerns of the Bishop of Norwich over the level of VAT such work attracts (letter, October 14).

Thankfully, in June the European Parliament took the first steps to harmonise EU VAT rates, particularly the proposed reduction in rates for repairs to historic buildings, which obviously include hundreds of churches. If the European Commission and subsequently the Council of Ministers ratify this decision our churches may benefit from a lower rate.

I believe, however, that it is important that people let Government know that this is their wish. Much of the success in Europe is attributed to the fact that many letters were received from campaigners in Norfolk and Suffolk. Perhaps a similar campaign directed to our own Government would achieve the desired result.

Yours sincerely,
FAY WILSON-RUDD
(Resources Adviser,
Diocese of Bath & Wells),
The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset.

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

New research into prostate cancer

From Mr Humphrey Burton

Sir, I read Dr Stuttaford's account (October 9) of his recent encounter with prostate cancer with particular interest.

It was an article of his on February 20 which alerted me, in the very week when I learnt through a routine check that I was suffering from the same complaint, to the merits of treatments being developed in the United States but not available in the UK.

I spent several months exploring the possibilities before opting for brachytherapy, a technique pioneered in Seattle by the Urology Resource Center under Dr Haakon Ragde. It is more widely known as seed implantation.

Tiny radioactive seeds (over 100 in my case) are planted in the prostate after computer analysis of an ultrasound scan has worked out the precise location of the cancer-affected areas in the gland.

More than 2,000 patients have received brachytherapy in Seattle over the past eight years. It is more accurate, and much less time-consuming, than conventional external radiation therapy, although unfortunately it can only be carried out when the cancer remains within the gland and has not spread into neighbouring organs or bones.

The success rate is at least as good as that achieved by radical prostatectomy, with virtually none of the debilitating and sometimes long-term side-effects which often accompany surgery.

I spent only four hours in hospital. I've lost not a day's work, and my PSA blood-test reading was down to 1.2 from nine after only half of the 100 days during which the seeds remain radioactive.

My private health insurance would not pay for treatment outside the UK, but luckily I had the savings. Seattle told me I was the first Briton to receive this type of seed implant.

Dr Stuttaford's readers will rejoice that he has come through his operation with flying colours. He is certainly right to stress the importance for men of a certain age to have routine PSA check-ups, but I hope he will also agitate for urgent attention to be given in this country to the development of this new treatment.

Yours sincerely,
HUMPHREY BURTON,
125 Oakwood Court, W14.
October 9.

From Mr C. A. A. Kilmister

Sir, It was good to read of the successful and happy outcome of the operation performed by an expert urological surgeon on Dr Thomas Stuttaford, but on the same page another article pointed out that research into the prostate is not a favourite object of charity, because the topic is an unlikely subject of polite conversation.

Happily many men are successfully treated. Yet because prostate cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in men it is time to shake off the shyness and to tackle the lethal nature of this condition.

The conquest of prostatic disorders will become a reality only when research is adequately funded.

Yours faithfully,
C. A. A. KILMISTER,
Prostate Research Campaign UK,
36 The Drive,
Northwood, Middlesex.
October 9.

Green and healthy

From Mr Andrew Butler

Sir, I was surprised to read of the Wyckiffe College vegetarian scholars — but not by the school's subsequent sporting prowess (letters, October 7 and 10; report, "Veggie scholars left on head", October 14).

Wyckiffe's head, George Sibby, noted the health benefits of a vegetarian diet in 1909.

Since then top athletes like Carl Lewis, Edwin Moses, Dave Scott (six-time Ironman triathlon winner) and Martina Navratilova, to name but a few, have also recognised the immense advantages of vegetarianism.

Perhaps more schools should take a leaf from this forward-thinking Edwardian's book.

Yours sincerely,
ANDREW BUTLER
(UK Representative),
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals,
PO Box 3169,
London SW15 2ZG.
October 14.

Excuses, excuses

From Mrs Ian Campbell

Sir, Many years ago my son, a young subaltern in the army, was told that the best way to avoid wrath on losing expensive equipment was to send a message: "Regret the loss of six water-bottles down a ravine".

After several weeks had elapsed a further message should be sent saying "Referring to my earlier message, for water-bottles read tanks".

Yours faithfully,
PATRICIA J. CAMPBELL,
Furzeor,
Sampford Spiney,
Yelverton, Devon.
October 13.

HAROLD ROBBINS

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THE
BUSINESS

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY OCTOBER 16 1997

New bid for MCI could give BT way out

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

MCI, the American telephone group, yesterday received a third takeover bid that could free BT from its controversial \$24 billion (£15 billion) alliance with MCI and stop an unwelcome \$30 billion takeover offer from WorldCom.

GTE, a large local phone and Internet service provider, is to offer \$25 billion in cash for MCI. Shares in GTE and MCI were suspended briefly in New York yesterday after rumours of the deal.

The news of the move came too late to affect trading on the London Stock Exchange, but BT is likely to get a boost from a GTE bid.

The new bid would allow BT to withdraw gracefully from its fraught attempt to take over MCI. BT also stands to gain a \$450 million severance payment and £3 billion from the sale of its 20 per cent stake in MCI.

BT's New York listed shares increased 4 per cent on the news of GTE's interest.

The GTE offer is believed to be worth \$38 per share. WorldCom's offer is worth \$41 per share, but, unlike GTE, WorldCom is offering a share swap not cash.

A collapse in WorldCom's volatile share price, based on a price-earnings ratio of 100, would quickly devalue the offer.

GTE and WorldCom are direct competitors in the US local phone and Internet market. GTE offers its services in 27 states in the American West and Mid-West.

GTE's bid, if successful, would be the biggest in corporate history. But analysts have voiced doubts about the ability of GTE to finance a large-scale cash acquisition.

The board of GTE is believed to have held several meetings yesterday, including a final one to approve the bid. However, MCI declined to comment on the offer. Commentary, page 27



The traditional face of the Post Office, exemplified by the Bramfield sub-office and village shop near Hertford, is changing rapidly

Lloyds sets up banking deal with Post Office

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
AND RICHARD MILES

THE Post Office and Lloyds-TSB has struck a deal which paves the way for the Post Office to become a leading force in the delivery of high street financial services.

A trial to start soon in selected areas is expected to lead to all of clearing bank's customers being able to use their local post office as their bank. The deal follows a link with Cooperative Bank that started last year and arrangements already in place with Alliance & Leicester through its subsidiary Girobank. The Post Office, which is awaiting the results of a government review into its future, is keen to extend such banking tie-ups with other banks.

Stuart Sweetman, managing director of Post Office's retail arm, Post Office Counters, said: "Post offices are being transformed into the largest electronic retail network in Europe. By the millennium every post office in the country, from the largest city office to the smallest village shop, will be on-line with a computer system which will open up opportunities to develop new financial services." The link-up between the



Peter Ellwood, chief executive of Lloyds TSB, could cut back on more branches

bank and Post Office Counters will initially allow Lloyds-TSB customers to carry out a limited range of banking transactions at 20 local offices, including cash withdrawals and paying-in cheques.

Both sides hope the relationship will develop into a full-blown banking service, available to Lloyds-TSB's 15 million customers at any of the Post Office's 19,200 local of-

fices. This would allow Peter Ellwood, chief executive of Lloyds-TSB, to scale back further the bank's 2,700-strong branch network.

Gordon Fell, Lloyds TSB's director of distribution, said: "Our strategy is to provide as many different points of access to our services as possible. For each of our branches there could be ten post offices in the surrounding area, many of

which are open on Saturdays." But the Banking, Insurance & Finance Union was less upbeat about the agreement, saying it would lead to job losses.

The bank has also struck a number of other partnership deals, most recently with Asda to provide an extended hours banking service. "Conventional branches will make way for alternative branches," said a

spokesman. Post Office Counters, which serves 28 million customers a week, has been steadily expanding its financial services through foreign exchange facilities, international money transfer and limited insurance products. The operation has also increased its bill payment business.

Alliance & Leicester, which has enjoyed a long relationship with the Post Office through Girobank, said the Lloyds-TSB tie-up would not encroach on its territory, and described it as a "tactical response" to branch closures in rural areas. Last year, Girobank accounted for more than 25 per cent of Alliance & Leicester's profits. Girobank is in the midst of renegotiating its contract with the Post Office.

Mr Sweetman said: "For banks and other organisations which need nationwide access for their customers, Post Office Counters can help provide that network."

The Post Office has persistently pressed for greater commercial freedom to enable full-scale expansion such as takeovers and to allow it to operate overseas.

Commentary, page 27

EU gives green light to Guinness merger

BY DOMINIC WALSH

GUINNESS and Grand Metropolitan's proposed £24 billion merger became a virtual certainty yesterday after the European Commission granted conditional approval to the drinks companies' deal.

The companies have been given the green light subject to the disposal of Guinness's Dewar's and Ainslie's Scotch whisky brands in Europe and a small number of changes to their distribution networks. They must comply within 15 months.

After the peace accord signed at the weekend with Bernard Arnault of LVMH, who had threatened to derail the merger, the last real hurdle is regulatory approval in the US. A decision is expected within the next few days.

Observers believe Dewar's, which sells 700,000 cases a year in Europe, may also provide the solution to the Federal Trade Commission's competition concerns, as it is one of America's best-selling Scotch brands. Such a requirement would mean GMG selling the Dewar's brand outright, making it more attractive to prospective purchasers such as Allied Domecq and Seagram. It could fetch £400 million.

Although GMG had hoped to avoid selling one of its big brands, the sale of Dewar's will still leave the combined group well-represented with J&B, Johnnie Walker and Bell's. It is understood that GMG had originally proposed selling a clutch of smaller brands such as VAT 69 and White Horse in addition to Ainslie's, whose main market is Belgium.

The other conditions are also less than onerous. In Belgium, they must give up distribution of Gilbey's gin and Wyborowa vodka, which in Greece they will cease to run the Bacardi agency. In Ireland, the EU has demanded the sale of minority stakes in two of the three main spirits distributors.

George Bull, chairman of GrandMet, and Tony Greener of Guinness welcomed the EU announcement as "a substantial step forward to achieving the creation of GMG Brands".

Analysts also reacted positively, suggesting that the conditions would cost GMG operating profits of no more than £20 million a year. Shares in GrandMet gained 26p and Guinness added 27p. Both closed at 625p.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	5263.7	(-35.2)
Yield	3.15%	
FTSE All share	2675.56	(-13.09)
Nikkei	17351.37	(+24.98)
New York		
Dow Jones	8263.38	(-32.91)*
S&P Composite	958.31	(-3.57)*

US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	99 1/8%	(100%)
Yield	6.41%	(6.36%)

LONDON MONEY		
3-month interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
3-month bill	11 1/4%	(11 1/4%)

STERLING		
New York	1.6238*	(1.6217)
London		
\$	1.6238	(1.6182)
DM	2.8424	(2.8421)
Sfr	2.5246	(2.5244)
Sfr	2.2704	(2.2681)
Yen	197.06	(197.05)
Sfr	100.3	(100.2)

DOLLAR		
London		
\$	1.7488*	(1.7515)
DM	1.5870*	(1.5874)
Sfr	1.4588*	(1.4591)
Yen	121.38*	(121.70)
Sfr	105.1	(105.1)

NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Dec)	\$19.65	(\$19.65)

GOLD		
London close	\$326.75	(\$326.19)

TOKYO		
Yen 121.45		

LONDON		
15-day (Dec)	\$19.65	(\$19.65)

GOLD		
London close	\$326.75	(\$326.19)

WH Smith to reject new offer

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

THE board of WH Smith, which met yesterday to consider revised takeover proposals from Tim Waterstone, is expected to issue a statement rejecting them by the end of the week.

The company published Mr Waterstone's proposals yesterday after its bank, Barings, consulted the Takeover Panel after details were leaked to the press.

WH Smith, which threw out Mr Waterstone's proposal a fortnight ago, is meeting shareholders in the next two days to offer its justifications and to indicate how Richard Handover, who has just taken over as chief executive, intends to lead the company.

Under the revised plan shareholders would receive between 150p and 200p for each WH Smith share, plus shares in a new holding company.

Commentary, page 27

Fears of further rate rise recede

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY AND PHILIP BASSETT

HOPES that the Bank of England will leave interest rates on hold next month rose yesterday after new data showed a smaller than expected decline in unemployment and no acceleration in earnings growth.

The minutes for the September monetary policy committee meeting also showed that the Bank is becoming less concerned about the inflationary impact of windfall-fuelled consumer spending. Unemployment fell by 27,800

in September to 1,467,600, or 5.2 per cent — the lowest level for 17 years. But the latest fall, the nineteenth consecutive monthly drop, was below market expectations, while average earnings growth remained static at 4.5 per cent.

Economists said the data provided some evidence that labour market activity is slowing. The separate Labour Force Survey showed quarterly unemployment declining by 40,000 — well below the rate seen in the previous quarter.

The minutes of the September monetary meeting showed the committee was unanimous in its decision not to raise rates last month. The committee concluded that economic data had "been mixed" since the previous rate rise in August and pointed to evidence that windfalls were posing a "smaller upside risk" to inflation than previously thought.

But the committee, echoing comments made by Alan Greenspan in America, ex-

pressed concern that the continuing rise in stock market prices could pose a threat to the health of the economy.

Andrew Cates, UK economist at UBS, said: "While there remains a risk of a November rate rise, we believe sufficient evidence has now emerged that the economy is slowing."

But the more positive interest rate outlook in the UK did little to boost the stock market, which was sent lower by renewed fears of US rate rises.

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But the committee, echoing comments made by Alan Greenspan in America, ex-

pressed concern that the continuing rise in stock market prices could pose a threat to the health of the economy.

Marcus 'sold with inside knowledge'

BY DOMINIC WALSH

MARTIN MARCUS, the former deputy chairman of Queens Moat Houses, sold £630,000 of QMH shares in 1993 when he realised the company's worsening financial situation would affect its annual results. The High Court was told yesterday.

Mr Marcus, who with three other former directors is suing QMH for unfair dismissal, sold half his shareholding in the hotel group on February 5, the day before the closed period that preceded the scheduled publication of its 1992 results on April 7. Trading in QMH shares was suspended on April 1.

Michael Burton QC, for QMH, alleged that although Mr Marcus had sold the 1.1

million shares before the closed period, he had done so "hours if not minutes before the closed period started". Moreover, he had done so on the basis of inside knowledge of "several crucial pieces of information that were not at that time known to the market".

Mr Burton claimed Mr Marcus had been aware that 1992 profits would not reach the £80 million-£85 million he had led the market to expect; that there were serious problems with the QMH incentive management scheme; that the company's debts had been exacerbated by undisclosed sale and leaseback deals in Germany; that the company would breach its interest cover covenant; and that a large proportion of the anticipated

profits would be generated by a dubious incentive scheme involving the company's German Holiday Inn hotels.

At the time of the sale, Mr Marcus told the Stock Exchange he needed the money for three reasons: to purchase a flat for his son, to pay for an operation for his wife and to finance the acquisition of shares in Harmony Leisure, of which he was a non-executive director. Mr Burton said Mr Marcus bought just £92,000 of Harmony shares, that he was merely looking for a flat, and that his wife's operation took place two years later costing just £2,200.

The four former directors, including John Baird, the company's founder, will put their case next week.

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New power structure at Lloyd's

By ADAM JONES

THE balance of power is to shift irrevocably at Lloyd's of London next year as wealthy individuals prepared to lose everything constitute a minority for the first time.

These unlimited-liability "names", whose numbers have been dwindling since the ruinous losses of the late 1980s and early 1990s, will supply just 40 per cent of underwriting capacity in 1998, Lloyd's revealed yesterday.

Since 1994, money put up by companies and pooled investment funds has taken their place. Next year this "corporate capital" will supply 60 per cent of underwriting capacity. In 1997, it supplied only 44 per cent.

The 1998 figures may be revised slightly before the year starts. They will strengthen calls from corporate capital providers for a larger say in the society's affairs. Lloyd's projections suggest 2,800 traditional names will have resigned this year, leaving less than 7,200.

SIB plan to boost payout fund limit

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE Securities and Investments Board, the chief City watchdog, is planning to double the annual limit for the Investors Compensation Scheme (ICS) to £200 million because of the soaring costs of compensating victims of personal pensions mis-selling.

The ICS, the investors' safety net, has to pay the compensation bill for victims of financial advisers that have left the industry or become bankrupt.

Since it was set up nearly a decade ago it has paid a total of £130 million to 10,500 investors in 318 firms.

As revealed in *The Times* last month, regulators fear that the cost of compensating thousands who had been wrongly advised to leave company schemes in favour of taking out a personal pension could push the ICS beyond its annual limit of £100 million — one year's claims could be greater than the total the ICS has paid out. According to the

Personal Investment Authority (PIA), the retail watchdog that is vetting compensation cases for the ICS, about 7,000 cases of possible mis-selling have been found. The PIA has a further 168,000 cases to analyse. The ICS estimated that at least 16,000 cases of mis-selling would have to be compensated for — the total costs of which could reach £144 million.

Andrew Winckler, SIB chief executive, said: "The current proposals are being made as a precautionary measure in the interests of investor protection. We have highlighted that the current limit might need to be raised in light of ICS's extra case stemming from the pension review."

Ultimately, the costs of paying compensation under the ICS have to be borne by the financial services industry. Initially, it was predicted that the total bill would reach £4 billion, but some now believe it could hit £8 billion.



Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, is to appoint an independent assessor

Power inquiry launched

AN INQUIRY has been launched into the closure of coal-fired power station units that had sufficient capacity to provide electricity for nearly a million people (Christine Buckley writes).

Stephen Littlechild, the electricity industry's regulator, is to appoint an independent assessor to advise him on decisions by National Power to close a unit at Willington and to mothball two sections at Tilbury and by PowerGen to shut a unit at Ferrybridge.

Professor Littlechild wants justification for the closures and wants the companies to offer the operations for sale or lease.

The decisions by National Power and PowerGen, the two biggest generators, to close down the three units is a fresh blow for the coal industry, which is currently negotiating crucial contracts to take it into the next century.

The closures are timed for the end of March when coal contracts that were arranged by the Government expire.

Siemens and BNFL consider merger

SIEMENS and BNFL are in talks to fuse some of their nuclear operations in a joint venture with sales of more than £900 million. The two companies are looking at merging Siemens' nuclear services operation with BNFL's fuel production division. Talks could be concluded within months.

A joint venture would give both sides a stronger hand in fuel production and nuclear power plant servicing and comes as BNFL is poised to merge with its fellow state-owned energy group Magnox, which runs the older generation of nuclear stations. The deregulation of the world's electricity markets is increasing the pressure on nuclear power plant operators to reduce their costs and increase plant availability. John Taylor, chief executive of BNFL, said: "These talks aim to evaluate the possible benefits of a merger which could lead to winning new business whilst reducing costs and enhancing the services we provide to our existing customers." BNFL employs 2,300 in the UK in fuel production while Siemens' nuclear operations are centred in Germany. A merger is not expected to lead to job reductions, a spokeswoman for Siemens said.

Managers' morale low

MANAGERS complain of being constantly under pressure, often working more than 50 hours a week and feeling insecure in their job, a survey showed today. Almost two out of three surveyed by the Institute of Management said that their firm had been "restructured" in the past year, often leading to job insecurity and lower morale. Managers feel guilty about taking time off work when they are sick, according to the survey of 1,300 people, and junior and middle managers complained of being kept in the dark about their firms' plans.

Calor sells £10m stake

CALOR GAS has sold a 33.3 per cent stake in Calortex, the domestic market joint venture, in a deal worth about £10 million. Calor, which was bought earlier this year by the Dutch group SHV, sold the holding to Nuon, another Dutch group. It will retain a 16.7 per cent holding and said the sale did not imply a loss of confidence in the domestic gas market, which is opening to competition. The sale was signalled after SHV took over Calor when it said it wanted to focus operations.

Hyder in Chinese deal

HYDER, the Welsh multi-utility, has made a £7 million investment in The China Water Company. Hyder has bought a 20 per cent interest in the business, which was set up to seek out investment opportunities for water and waste-water projects in China. Such projects are financed mainly by the public sector. Graham Hawker, group chief executive of Hyder, said: "This investment represents a strategic move forward in our commitment towards low-risk growth in the international infrastructure market."

Tradepoint chief named

TRADEPOINT, the electronic market set up to rival the London Stock Exchange, has appointed Nic Stuchfield as its new chief executive. Mr Stuchfield is chief operating officer of Barclays Global Investors, the asset management arm of Barclays. TradePoint, which lost more than £6 million in its last financial year, is hoping that the London Stock Exchange's switch to electronic trading next Monday will boost its revenues. A recent deal enables investment banks to access the new LSE market and TradePoint on the same screen.

Bank	Buy	Sell	Bank	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.38	2.14	Malta	0.663	0.604
Austria Sch	13.24	13.24	Netherlands Gld	8.262	3.067
Belgium Fr	81.82	88.35	New Zealand \$	2.68	2.44
Canada \$	2.322	2.184	Norway Kr	12.08	11.14
Denmark Dkr	0.894	0.812	Portugal Esc	301.53	279.50
France Fr	11.42	10.53	S Africa Rd	8.30	8.34
Finland Mk	5.07	5.32	Spain Ptas	281.28	232.50
Germany Dr	10.01	9.28	Sweden Kr	13.11	12.01
Greece Dr	3.01	2.79	Switzerland Fr	2.52	2.30
Hong Kong \$	13.33	12.19	Turkey Lira	288.047	278.69
Iceland	128	108	USA \$	1.729	1.588
Ireland Pt	1.18	1.07			
Israel Sh	6.27	5.27			
Italy Lira	2083	2718			
Japan Yen	211.83	194.30			

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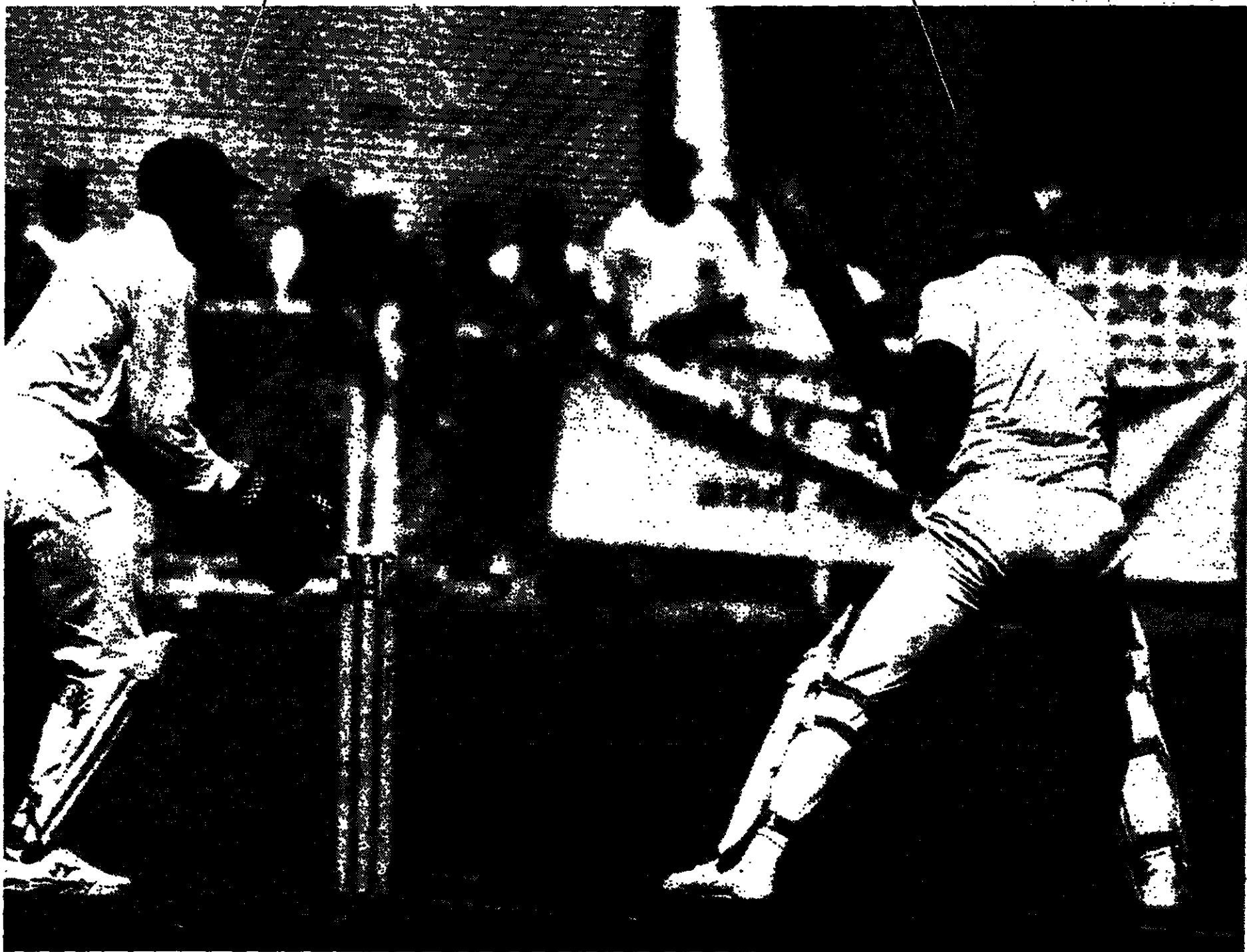
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CHANGING TIMES

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Bring the board to book



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Jeremy Hardie, the chairman of WH Smith, has graciously agreed that his board will consider the new takeover proposals from Tim Waterstone. Not all the directors may attend the crucial meeting in person: the problem with having high-powered non-executives is that they tend to have heavy demands on their time. Right now, Martin Taylor is occupied with extricating Barclays from BZW when he is not working out the ideal way for the Government to sort out the tax and benefits muddle. Marjorie Scardino's priority is reshaping the Pearson group. No doubt both of them are deeply concerned about Smith's predicament, but emergency board meetings might have to be conducted via a telephone link.

Whatever the practical problems, the WH Smith board will feel obliged to examine Mr Waterstone's offer. The betting is that they will then feel equally obliged to turn it down.

This will naturally be frustrating for Mr Waterstone and Ian Martin, the Unigate chairman who has lined up beside him. But why should Mr Hardie and his colleagues come to any other conclusion? Since a key stone of the Waterstone plan is the removal of the existing chairman, Mr Hardie could be forgiven for being less than enthusiastic.

If shareholders want the chance to accept Waterstone's offer, they will first have to put hefty pressure on a board that

has proved relatively impervious to the needs of investors. Waterstone and his team insist that the costs of a contested bid battle are beyond their means, so they will only proceed with an offer if it is recommended by the Smith board. It would take more than the usual muted moans of a few disgruntled institutions to persuade Hardie & Co into such action. Instead, a charm offensive from WH Smith is being launched, to try and persuade those disgruntled institutions that all will be well now that Richard Handover, the long-serving insider who was recently ousted as chief executive's chair, has taken control.

Investors should be wary. It is doubtful whether even his best friends would describe Mr Handover as a man of vision, let alone a stylish retailer who can find WH Smith a *raison d'être* for the next century.

Messrs Waterstone and Martin may not have the ideal solution for WH Smith — and who can blame them for being a little sketchy in spelling it out at this stage. Certainly a rather unfortunate impression of Mr Waterstone's motives and business acumen may have been given by his initial thoughts of a

price tag of around £35 million for his infant Daisy and Tom business, which was rapidly reduced to just £9.7 million when institutions deemed the first try a trifle greedy. But Waterstone, with Warburg's backing, is making clear that there is potential to revitalise WH Smith. A change of leadership should be enough to achieve that, and it would be a poor reflection of investor power if a change of ownership was a prerequisite.

Time to take the money and run

Fortune is smiling on BT. A cash offer for MCI is more than Sir Iain Vallance and Sir Peter Bonfield dare have hoped for as they pondered how they might wriggle free of their potentially ruinous liaison with MCI. Now they should take the money and scamper fast. Any feelings that they need to save

face by indicating a long-term strategic wish to continue to have an involvement with MCI need to be buried rapidly.

The BT knights owe a great deal to WorldCom for striding onto the scene, challenging their own misplaced bid for MCI and putting the company at the centre of a tussle between US telecommunications giants.

WorldCom was offering only paper, which posed a problem for BT. While the company has shot up the rankings, its valuation is based on hope and crossed fingers rather than reality. Even those optimists who had been prepared to look on WorldCom benignly must have had second thoughts when the company proudly revealed Liam Strong as the new chief executive of its international division.

Mr Strong, who sprang to fame as a very successful marketing director at British Airways, announced that he had been impressed by the similarities

between the airline business and telecommunications. Half a dozen years ago he told me he had noted similarities between the airline business and the retail industry. Thus he launched into a disastrous reign as chief executive of Sears.

WorldCom, with or without Mr Strong's best endeavours, looked like a company that could crash as fast as it had risen. For BT, the prospect of swapping its stake in MCI for WorldCom paper or hanging onto a stake in a group controlled by the Americans was hardly an attractive option.

Cash, however, is always welcome. Sir Peter and Sir Iain should say thank you to GTE and look for partnership closer to home. The obvious deal is the one that came so close to fruition a few years ago: a merger with Cable & Wireless. The restructuring of C&W, with the hiving off of the UK cable business into CWC, makes for an almost perfect fit. It would bring BT the international

scale it seeks with little in the way of monopoly to upset the regulators. If Sir Iain could sort out a deal with Dick Brown, the C&W boss, then he would be free to leave BT on a high note. The rumours still suggest that Sir Iain, the son of a Post Office man, would still like to prove that he can carry a top job in a different field. This would be his chance.

Post Office delivers banking solution

Bank customers, anxious to pay money into an account or cash a cheque, will feel perfectly at home in the Post Office. The same queues, the same missing staff at empty windows, the same tendency to be shut when customers might like them to be open.

But the decision by Lloyds TSB to experiment with turning post office branches into mini branches of the bank should be viewed more positively. It is indicative of the thoughtful approach of Sir Brian Pittman and Peter Ellwood, who have eschewed ambitions to be a global investment banker to concentrate on their basic business. If the deal with the Post Office

proceeds, it will enable the bank to shed expensive properties at a much faster rate than it has done so far without penalising those customers who like to do simple banking transactions in person. For the rest, there will be more and better telephone banking, more automatic telling machines where they are most wanted and better staffed branches for more complicated transactions. Sir Brian knows he must compete not just with his high street rivals but with the bank of Sainsbury, the bank of Tesco and goodness knows who else may soon be muscling in on his territory. The Post Office plan could give him an important edge in the battle. But he will have to insist on better staffing levels if customers are not to be driven elsewhere. Some supermarkets promise that if queues at the checkout go beyond two people, they will open more tills.

Howard's way

THE former famous undertaker, Howard Hodgson, is still seeking compensation from Ronson for his ousting from the company in June. The catalogue of criticisms levelled against his reign yesterday indicates that the company has no intention of paying. Losses of £5.3 million and an admission that the company is in a chaotic muddle provided an eloquent indication of why Mr Hodgson is likely to be restricted to private companies in the future.

Smiths changes focus as group sales top £1bn

By PAUL DURMAN

SMITHS INDUSTRIES, the aircraft electronics and medical pumps group, signalled that it needs to pay more attention to lifting sales if it is to sustain its strong record of increasing profits.

The highly rated company has grown rapidly on the back of acquisitions and its ability to consistently improve its profits margins. Sir Roger Hurn, chairman, yesterday acknowledged Smiths would eventually hit a ceiling for margin improvement. He also suggested the group's medical

division, its most profitable business, may finally be facing some slippage in margins after acquiring control of Japan Medico, a lower-margin distribution business.

Sir Roger said: "Our biggest problem, as such a high performing company, is to generate top-line (i.e. sales) growth without it being significantly at the expense of margin." Keith Butler-Wheelhouse, chief executive, said the biggest challenge was to continue finding sensibly priced deals.

Group sales rose 7 per cent

to £1.08 billion, but this includes £47.2 million of turnover from acquisitions made in the year to August 2.

Smiths reported a 16 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £192.1 million, and a similar improvement in earnings per share to 42.5p. This excludes £10.7 million of profits from property sales, although this was wiped out by the £11.2 million loss on the sale of an engine controls business to LucasVarity. A final dividend of 11.7p will increase the total payout 10.2 per cent to 17.85p.

Although the group improved margins across its three divisions, the best performance came from aerospace, where profits rose 31 per cent to £59.3 million. Smiths expects to continue to benefit from the upturn in the aerospace industry.

Medical systems, the division worst hit by the strength of the pound, edged profits higher to £74.7 million (£73.1 million), and made a small improvement in the 24 per cent margin. Sir Roger said analysts had predicted a fall in the company's medical margins for as long as he could remember, but so far it had always achieved an increase. Referring to the Japan Medico deal, he said: "If we grow the business by going into distribution, then we could see a reduction in overall margins. So what?"

The industrial division, which includes Vent-Axia fans, raised profits from £49.7 million to £60.6 million, helped by acquisitions.



Sir Roger Hurn, left, and Keith Butler-Wheelhouse

Scout poised for double deal online

SCOOT, the telephone information service formerly known as Freepages, is poised to set up joint ventures with Yahoo and Excite, two of the biggest search engines on the Internet (Chris Ayres writes).

The move will make Scout one of the largest companies of its kind in the UK, and will intensify its rivalry with Talking Pages and Yellow Pages, owned by BT, which have their own web site.

Scout's deal with Excite was signed yesterday, and an almost identical agreement with Yahoo is expected next week. Yahoo and Excite are listed on the New York Stock Exchange, with Scout floated in London.

The company also this week signed a deal with Vodafone, the mobile phone operator.

Bid approaches made to Etam

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

AN ADMISSION yesterday by Etam, the struggling high street women's wear chain, that it has been approached by potential bidders sent its share price leaping 28 per cent to a yearly high of 140p.

The company is talking to more than one suitor and is discussing the possibility of an outsider taking a stake as well as the possibility of a takeover.

Stanley Lewis, chairman, whose family company, Oona, has a 40 per cent stake, is thought likely to try to sell the stake, if not the whole company. Analysts favour New Look, the privately-owned clothing retailer, as a buyer. The company was shunned during an attempted float three years ago and has been consid-

ering another attempt within the next six months.

By buying Etam it would be able to use the company's listing as a way of reversing on to the stock market.

New Look, founded by Tom Singh, has expanded rapidly in the past three years and now has nearly 400 stores, compared with Etam's 216.

Etam's shares plunged in July after it issued the latest in a series of profit warnings. It said that its interim losses would be greater than expected because of disappointing trading in June.

Other possible buyers of Etam are thought to include two American retailers, The Gap and Nine West, the shoe chain.

Ronson £5.8m lighter

By FRASER NELSON

RONSON, the lighter-maker, has spent £2.8 million on an emergency refinancing package leaving a loss of £5.8 million at half-way.

The company, which is fighting a £500,000 unfair dismissal claim from Howard Hodgson and Christine Pickles, its former directors, has written off £2.5 million of stock and bad debts in an attempt to turn itself around.

It spent £230,000 on consultants to help it find a path to recovery during the half-year.

Redundancy costs came to £300,000, on top of a £580,000 charge for uncollected debts and returned goods and a £620,000 stock provision. Simon Cowling, chairman, gave no further news about how takeover talks are developing. Mr Hodgson has said he is not the bidder, although he is known to have offered to buy the 17.7 per cent stake held by Albion Fund. Losses per share sank to 5.83p, against earnings of 0.04p last time. The interim dividend was scrapped and none is expected at the year end.

BBC Resources tunes into business needs

By RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

BBC RESOURCES, the technical and studios arm of the BBC, has been increasingly involved in making corporate videos and business television as part of its role as a separate trading

unit within the Corporation. The unit, which is expected to become a separate subsidiary of the BBC before the end of the financial year, is being encouraged to make the best use of space capacity, such as periods when studios are empty.

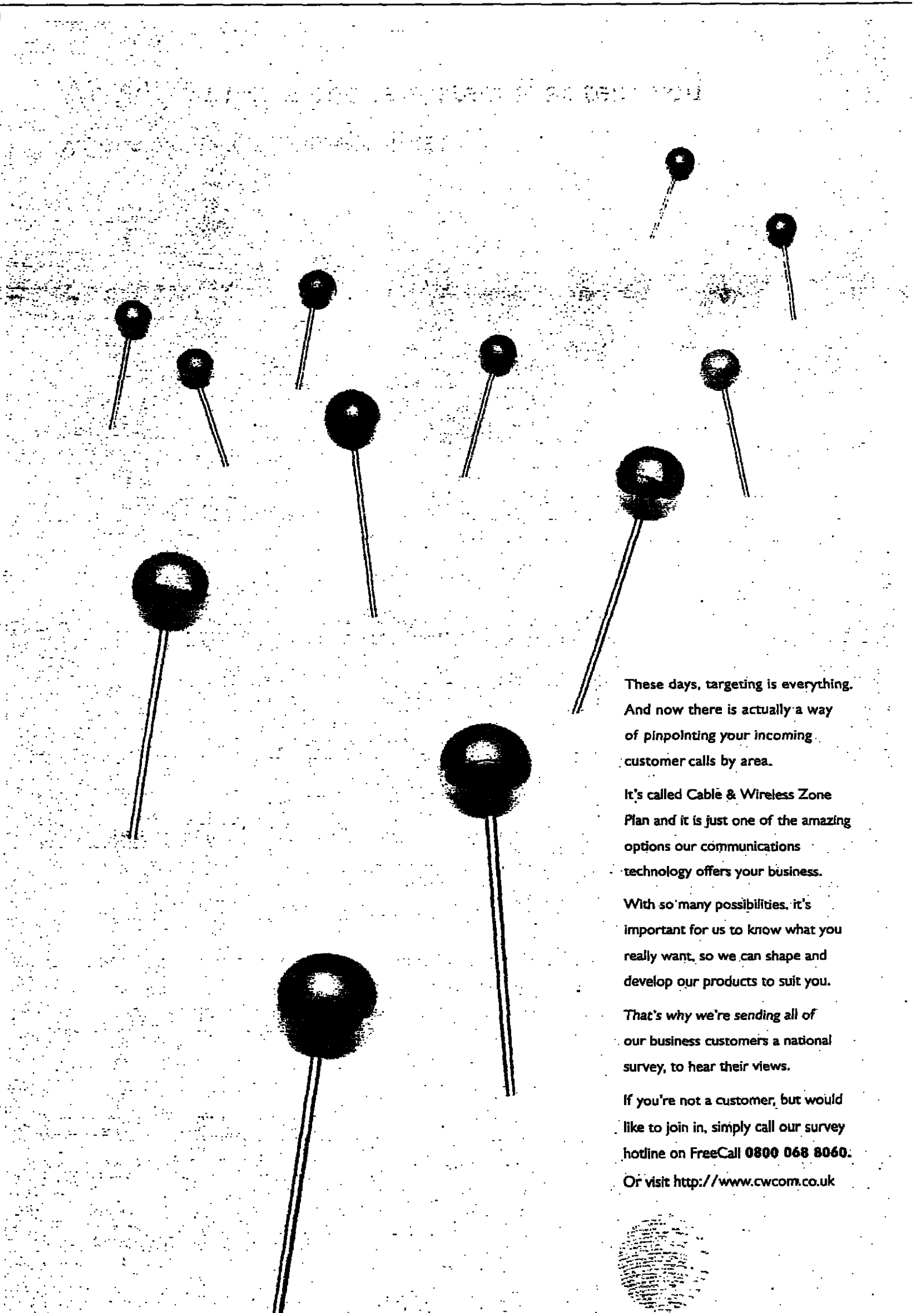
Corporate work so far has involved

a video for the Law Society, the solicitors' body, and a video called *The Wonder of Belfast* for the Belfast Chamber of Commerce. BBC Resources has also made commercials for regional electricity companies.

Industrial companies are starting to notice although the BBC usually gets

its corporate video work by word of mouth, or through other agencies or production companies.

Despite the move to outside work 80 per cent of Resources' work is still for the BBC. In the 1996-97 financial year it made a trading surplus of £15 million. External business totalled £26 million.



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CABLE & WIRELESS

MICHAEL CLARK

Charles Landa at Société Générale Strauss Turnbull urged clients to switch out

LONDON FINANCIAL

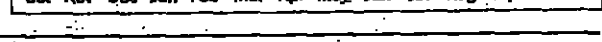
Closing Prices Page 33
CIAL FUTURES

DOLLAR RATES

Australia	1.3633-1.3642	Oct 11
Austria	12.33-12.34	trading
Belgium (Conn)	36.12-36.16	

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Australia	1.3633-1.3642	AMP Inc	51
Austria	12.33-12.34	AMR Corp	11
Belgium (Com)	36.12-36.16	AT & T	9
Canada	1.3813-1.3818	Exxon	11
Denmark	6.6751-6.6771	ABB Ltd	11
France	5.8725-5.8735	Admiral Leasing	11
Germany	1.3822-1.3825		

Grapple	2,100	Tomlinson	1,500
Grand Mel	5,400	Unifiber	8,700
Gulfstream	3,200	Urd Utilities	3,100
HSCBC	4,400	Urd News	585
Halifax	4,700	Vodafone	2,800
Hays	453	Wheatland	1,700
ICI	3,500		
		Domination Res	35
		Donnelly (RIO)	35
		Dow Corp	67
		Dow Chemical	40
		Dow Jones	40
		Dresser	43
		Duke Power	43

Landbridge	2,800	1,000	Eastman Kodak	650	
Land Sees	1,300	Zeneca	1,700	Entan Corp	100

[illegible]

Treasury Market Rates: 2 month 1/8% 7		Low 6		Week Ends: 7	
Discount Bills (Dib): 2 mth 1/8% 7		sell: 2 mth 1/8% 7		3 mth 1/8% 7	
1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth	
Prime Bank Bids (Dib)	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2
Sterling Money Rates	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2
Interbank	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2
Overnight: open 7, close 7					
Local Authority Depos	7-7 1/2	n/a	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2
Sterling CDs	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2
Dollar CDs	3.55	n/a	5.62	5.75	5.90
Building Society CDs	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2	7-7 1/2

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)					
Currency	5 days	3 mths	5 mths	6 mths	Call
Dollar	7-7 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2
Deutsche Mark	7-7 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2
French Franc	7-7 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2
Swiss Franc	7-7 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2
Italian	7-7 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2	3-5 1/2

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)					
Bullion: Open \$327.00-327.50	Close: \$326.50-327.00	High: \$327.20-327.70	Low: \$326.00-326.50	AM: \$326.80	PM: \$326.50
Kruggerand: \$326.00-326.50	Gold: \$325.00-325.50	Palladium: \$218.00-219.00	Platinum: \$438.00-439.00	Silver: \$5.05-5.06	Gold: \$326.50-327.00

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES					
Mkt Rates for Oct 15	Range	Close	1 month	3 months	
Antwerp	1.9153-1.9153	1.9077-1.9077	1.9077	1.9077	
Brussels	58.070-58.071	58.060-58.061	19-147P	56-47P	
Copenhagen	10.479-10.584	10.820-10.832	10-147P	56-47P	
Dublin	1.0741-1.0847	1.1007-1.1010	10-147P	56-47P	
Frankfurt	2.836-2.841	2.841-2.843	10-147P	56-47P	
Lisbon	258.45-258.47	258.21-258.47	10-147P	56-47P	
London	11.212-11.212	11.212-11.212	10-147P	56-47P	
Milano	2.722-2.723	2.726-2.727	10-147P	56-47P	
Madrid	2.220-2.224	2.220-2.223	10-147P	56-47P	
New York	1.621-1.625	1.623-1.625	1.623-1.625	1.623-1.625	
Osaka	11.414-11.417	11.404-11.411	10-147P	56-47P	
Stockholm	9.499-9.500	9.499-9.500	10-147P	56-47P	
Switzerland	12.252-12.312	12.252-12.312	10-147P	56-47P	
Tokyo	156.24-157	156.19-157	10-147P	56-47P	
Zurich	15.044-15.047	15.040-15.043	10-147P	56-47P	
Zurich	2.365-2.374	2.369-2.374	10-147P	56-47P	

South African dollar		1.5272-2.5164	BankAmerica		75	75	Hatchey Foods		59	59	Sara Lee Corp		31	31
Swedish krona		1.00 95.97-100	Hawthorn		75	75	Hawthorn		75	75	Schlumberger		59	59
Swiss franc		2.5222-2.5225	Raychem T-79		125	125	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
Tanzanian shilling		1.00 100.00-100.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
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U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
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U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
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U.S. dollar		1.00 1.00-1.00	Rohm & Haas		75	75	Hill North		25	25	Schlumberger		59	59
U.S. dollar														

Improve our cars, don't ban them

Toyota Motor, the Japanese group that makes cars in Derbyshire, is about to launch a potentially revolutionary car. The Toyota Prius, due to go on sale in Japan in two months' time at the UK equivalent of about £14,000, claims to be the first mass car to combine an electric motor to give freedom of the road at speeds above 30 mile per hour.

Some caution is called for. We should establish urgently if the Prius works and really uses electric power in congested areas, rather than sporting an unused add-on. If so, it should be the star of this year's London Motor Show, environmental campaigners should be dancing in the streets and Cabinet ministers should combine all their influence to have this car made in Britain for domestic and continental markets within months rather than years.

Don't hold your breath. Excitement at the Motor Show centres on a track where enthusiasts can try out gas-guzzling off-road vehicles few are likely to need in real life.

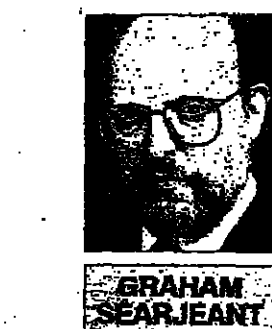
The politics of cars has become an equally irrational combination of disapproval and class privilege. The chattering classes, pausing over a brandy before they catch a taxi, agree that the great era of the car is over. You might as well pretend that the wheel had never been invented or, as Malaysia's Prime Minister did in a fraught moment, that financial speculation could be banned by regulation.

Cars are here to stay and to expand hugely in numbers as poor countries develop. Cars are a great liberator, for families to visit their cousins, for working women, for elderly folk otherwise stuck at home and for the underprivileged in urban estates who can taste the spiritual release of getting away into the countryside. In a society where the Establishment consensus insists, jobs are transitory and factories come and go, cars are vital to help ordinary folk to find

work and survive. Transport is always a bane to those it passes, unless they profit from it. Last century, swaths of central London were degraded into slums by the intrusion of environmentally disastrous railways. Six years ago, bicycles were banned, as a dangerous menace, from the centre of Cambridge, where they had long been the model form of transport.

Cars exacerbate three distinct problems: congestion, pollution and global warming. Failure to accommodate growth in car use intelligently has also sent many town centres into a spiral of decline that planners perversely try to reverse by making incoming car-borne consumers unwelcome.

Market approaches are more fruitful. Pollution, which wreaks most harm to urban life, imposes costs on others that are not borne by the polluter, so governments need to rebalance incentives. Even



GRAHAM SPEARJEANT

modest market signals converted most of us to lead-free petrol. Promoting cars that use electric power in town could require changes in licence fees, petrol tax, even VAT. Toyota's Prius aims to halve petrol consumption, which would help to market change.

That supposes governments wish to deal with the real problems. Much of the new transport

politics elaborates old Labour's prejudice that public is good and private bad, even though public transport has been privatised. If pollution were the central concern, the priority would be to make buses cleaner, since that is much more easily done, and to question every brewery closure that multiplies ton-miles of transport. It isn't. The priority of an integrated transport system seems to be to make life hard for car-owners and push as many as possible onto buses and trains.

How reactionary. Public transport is better termed collective transport. It is economical only for journeys that lots of people do together. These consist mainly of moving from suburbs to big workplaces in the centre of towns, a huge but declining market of long-distance transport between big centres, and short journeys within big conurbations. Commuting via

public transport helps most to cut pollution and congestion, but there are few healthier occupations than waiting in bad weather after work for the privilege of straphanging among 50 people with colds. Commuter services are also the costliest to expand. Rail is already stretched at rush hour. Relatively few buses cover their overheads on commuter traffic alone, hence the old bangers churning out fumes the rest of the day, with hardly anyone in them. Aside from new niches and technical advances, expanding public transport would expand the billions taxpayers pour into subsidies exponentially, not least for better staffing and security. Taxpayers would not volunteer, so the cost of private transport would be raised to give room for much higher charges. The net effect is merely to cut living standards, hardly a progressive policy aim.

How much better if polluting emissions from cars in urban areas can be slashed, while allowing market forces and individual choice to cut costs and improve service. That would still leave the problems of global warming and congestion. The former is a tiny element in the key world dilemma of how to help billions of poor people in hot countries to improve their living standards without destroying the planet. It will not be solved on the streets of Islington.

Congestion has always cost money, but is automatically dealt with by market forces. If queues grow beyond the optimum length, people avoid them by shopping out of town or relocating businesses. Calls to ban inessential traffic or price low-income families off the road are attempts by the privileged to make other people suffer for their convenience.

If transport planning is to make economic sense, it must encourage higher living standards, make room for people's aspirations and revel in firms making money out of environmental gains.

Euro just one front for America in a united states of Europe



AMERICAN AGENDA
BRONWEN MADDOX

The way we see it, America has had to win four wars for Europe this century: the First World War, the Second World War, the Cold War and Bosnia. This was how an Administration official put the American attitude to Europe. "There is a feeling that Europeans have difficulty getting along with each other and there is by now a bit of exasperation over here, a feeling that it should now be up to Europe to reach some kind of internal stability."

That sentiment goes some way to explain the United States' curious position on the euro. The Administration wants it to happen, that much is clear. But it has been politely agnostic on the economic virtues or failings of the project. Indeed, some parts of the Administration, and on occasion the President, appear to have politicised the issue to the point where they regard it primarily as a diplomatic glue for a fractured continent. The danger is that they are ignoring the complexity of the economic problems that may follow, and the United States' foreign policy towards Europe is resting on a distorted foundation.

Until this summer the Administration, Congress and the American media seemed to find it hard to take European monetary union seriously. But as the New York Times recently commented, somewhere along the line "it stopped being a joke". But if the quips have given way to a serious consideration, the judgment remains a puzzle.

Throughout Europe's years of wrangling over EMU, the Administration's star has remained carefully reserved. It has never entered into a debate about whether the project is desirable for Europe



Madeleine Albright is committed to the expansion of Nato, which dominates the US's European policy

or its trading partners. "It's the business," has been the starting point.

That tone has clearly been articulated by Larry Summers, Deputy General Secretary to the US Treasury, and the architect of much of America's international economic policy. In part that sanguine stance is based on the belief that the euro does not pose any immediate threat to the dollar's role in the international system.

During a speech in May, the first time that a senior Administration official had addressed the subject, Mr Summers said that the euro was unlikely to replace the dollar any time soon as the world's leading reserve currency. He was more tactful than the Chinese Government, which last week said that it expected the euro to be a "soft and unstable currency in its early years" and that it would

keep its foreign exchange reserves in dollars, but he made his point.

Since May Mr Summers has spelt out several times the Administration's two main concerns about the project: that it be a strong currency, not jeopardising America's trade balance with Europe and that Europe make rapid progress in reforming its tax structures and labour markets. Without that progress, the US fears that European growth will be sluggish, restraining the market for American exports.

European countries, as much as Japan, were annoyed at the Denver Summit of the Eight in May when Mr Summers lectured them that the US was the "world's most flexible and dynamic economy" and that other countries "have things to learn from us".

But clearly he is right to point out that Europe has neglected crucial reforms for decades and to suggest that EMU may provide a seductive distraction from making those changes. Those in Europe who assume that EMU itself will prompt these reforms, even where the pressure to meet the criteria for joining did not, are surely too optimistic.

All the same, there is something odd about the Administration's stance, which amounts to saying "it will be a good thing, if it works". As it acknowledges, the project may lead a long way short of the version that would best suit the US either in being a weak currency or in failing to provide a catalyst for reform.

Yet the tone remains sanguine; the concerns are not pressed home with particular urgency or weight, despite the high chance — probability, some would say — that they

will not be met. The reticence is curious. The US is, after all, not shy about voicing its objections to the details of other countries' economic policies, notably the level of the yen. It is not, come to that, hesitant in telling Europe how to arrange its political affairs: it has pressed repeatedly this year for the European Union to expand eastward, to accompany the similar expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

Part of the answer to the puzzle lies in the President's own instinctive support for EMU: as he has made clear on this week's tour of Latin America, he has developed a conviction of the value of the economic ties that bind nations together. Somewhat to his surprise, the promotion of international trade is emerging as one of his strongest legacies. If only because cherished domestic projects have

been frustrated by the Republican-controlled Congress. The value of economic linkages in promoting peace and stability has become one of his favourite themes.

In terms of policy towards Europe, his beliefs have bolstered the current views of some of his officials, captured in the sentiment at the start of this piece. In line with Mr Clinton's internationalist instincts, the Administration has emphatically rejected the isolationist view so often heard on Capitol Hill — the view that the US can no longer afford to intervene in other continents. But there is still a detectable note, particularly in the State Department, that the US would be happy to see Europe edge closer to something resembling "the United States of Europe".

In this view, EMU is just one of three strands tying Europe more closely together, along with Nato expansion and the mooted widening of the EU. Judging by the attention given to the question by senior Administration officials, it often seems the neglected one.

It is the Nato expansion that currently dominates the US's European policy. That is perhaps unsurprising, given the personal commitment to the project of Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State, and Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott, as well as the US's direct interests. But it is also the simplest of the three negotiations, given the length of time Nato has been in existence. In comparison, the US appears guilty of wilful simplification in urging the US to expand at the same time. The costs of EU expansion on the richer countries, the political problems of presenting these to taxpayers, the impact on the intricate internal cross-subsidies, all dwarf in complexity the issues involved in expanding the defence umbrella.

In these three areas — EMU, the EU and Nato — the Administration seems guilty of sometimes treating as political questions what are primarily matters of economics, trade and defence. Clearly, the Administration's job is simpler the more it can treat Europe as one bloc. But that approach is a recipe for misunderstanding and disillusionment if the glue fails to stick.

BUSINESS LETTERS

Not all disqualified directors are rogues

From Mr Roger Reeves

Sir, I am one of those 1,219 directors disqualified last year, mentioned in your article of October 7, and from my own experiences I believe the system requires radical overhaul as to the merits of adjudication.

Yes, I would say that, wouldn't I? However, as regards the stigma surrounding disqualification, all are tarred with the same brush as being dishonest and fraudulent, regardless of the level of severity of the reasons for disqualification. Even the Trade Minister, Nigel Griffiths, is reported as using the generalisation of "unscrupulous and dishonest directors".

Admittedly, many directors go out of their way to be rogues and force their devious plans on unsuspecting customers and creditors. But many (if not the majority disqualified) are caught up in the maelstrom of complicated bureaucracy surrounding the Companies Act and are banished from the boardroom by being seen as administratively complacent or by being sufficiently uneducated in the finer points of directors' responsibilities, with their actions (or lack of them), however, not significantly contributing to a company's commercial performance or duties to shareholders, creditors or customers.

Additionally, many are directors of their own family businesses, being majority shareholders and beneficiaries of their own success, where the Act only serves as a textbook model in how to run the size of organisation that they never even aspire to.

The argument is often cited that if they desire to have the benefits of limited liability, then they must play by the rules: rules applicable to both league and club. Fine, but not many clubs have access to trainers and management skills which are available to the league players.

A disqualification order is set by the court for a term of between two and 15 years — dependent upon the severity of the misdemeanour. So in the lesser cases of non-compliance with the Act, such as late returns and the like, terms of disqualification run between two and six years. For fraud and dishonesty, seven to 15 years; determined by the quantum and merit of those affected.

Being disqualified for lesser years amounts to the same stigma being attached as for those who are disqualified for the greater terms, in the latter cases, more than likely well-deserved. So for some administrative oversights, a truly honest and upright citizen is branded for life as being an unscrupulous rogue.

Even after the term of disqualification has expired, the records of disqualified directors are held at Companies House and also by many of the credit reference agencies. So the opportunity of obtaining a senior management position to resume an interrupted career is virtually impossible. As also is the case if one wants to take up some public position or undertake charity work. In fact a few years' disqualification turns out to be a life sentence!

The DTI needs to understand the differences in style of running the smaller business to that of the corporate empire and amend the Act and the penalties in such a way that takes into account the fact that most disqualified directors did not meaningfully break the rules but were caught up in the web of a complicated Companies Act conspired in part to deal with those hell-bent on making money regardless of legislation.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER REEVES,
Moss House,
Malpas,
Cheshire.

Source of income?

From Mr Keith Sanderson

Sir, Following the recent attack by Ian Byatt, the Director-General of Ofwat, on the level of dividend payments by the water companies, perhaps I could shed some light on their sources of income.

My sister recently moved into a new house in Nottingham and has a water meter for the first time. She has just received her first water bill — for £3.665.

She tells me that the water company has agreed to investigate, as "it appears that there may be a leak somewhere".

Yours faithfully,
KEITH SANDERSON,
14 Bowgrave Drive,
Garstang,
Preston,
Lancashire.

The mitigation of loss

From Mr Ian S.O. Williams
Sir, Mr Bill Harrison of BZW is paid a guaranteed minimum bonus of £125 million and a salary of £300,000. Can someone explain the difference between salary and guaranteed bonus?

Mr Harrison, it would appear, is to receive a very substantial payoff from BZW even though he is unlikely to remain unemployed for very long. If Mr Harrison does get fixed up elsewhere within a month or two, the clear implication is that the normal rules on mitigation of loss will not be applied to Mr Harrison. Will an explanation for such a waiver be given to Barclays shareholders?

Yours faithfully,
IAN S.O. WILLIAMS,
10 Church Street,
Alcester, Warwickshire.

WDA respects limits on assistance for investors

From the Chairman, Welsh Development Agency

Sir, There have been several articles and letters recently in the press suggesting that the Welsh Development Agency had "gazumped" other regional agencies and so unfairly attracted inward investment to Wales. I would like to make three things absolutely clear.

First, there are agreed limits on the amount of assistance that can be given, which varies from area to area, reflecting European and UK regional policies. Secondly, the WDA has always and will always scrupulously respect those limits. Thirdly, in our experience investors make their choice of location on a wide variety of factors, which include the quality, productivity and flexibility of the workforce, the infrastructure and the ability of the various bodies concerned to meet their needs.

I deeply regret the misinformation which appears to have been circulated about this matter and which is most unhelpful to the inward investment efforts of the United Kingdom as a whole. If Wales has proved attractive to investors it is for the wider range of factors I have referred to. Yours faithfully,
DAVID S. ROWE-BEDDOE,
Chairman,
Welsh Development Agency,
Principality House,
The Friary,
Cardiff.

Oily Sensation

TO THE Institute of Contemporary Art next Tuesday when five newly commissioned "works of art" will be unveiled by an organisation not known in the past for its artistic temperament, the soapuds to spot treatment giant Procter & Gamble. Saatchi & Saatchi, P&G's ad agency, has commissioned five artists whose works will feature in a £20 million campaign for Oil of Ulay, the anti-ageing cream, attempting to dissipate its old fuddy-duddy image.



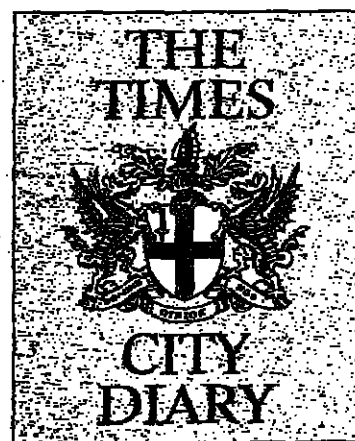
Alan Sugar: "He has ability, but seems afraid to use it"

I am particularly looking forward to the ad from Tracey Emin, which apparently will feature a pink neon sign flashing the message "Fantastic to feel beautiful". After all, is not Ms Emin the artist avidly backed by Charles Saatchi, who is not exactly a friend of Saatchi & Saatchi, having resigned from the agency he founded in protest at the firing of his brother, Maurice. Ms Emin currently features in the Royal Academy's Sensation exhibition with a tent on which is written the names of every man with whom she has enjoyed friendly relations. I trust this will feature in the new Persil adverts.

Report card

IF YOU can't get to the ICA on Tuesday then at least a trip to Hackney Community College in East London on Wednesday. Alan Sugar, a former pupil, will be making the first stop in his Treasury-sponsored 12-date tour of educational establishments to encourage young people to start their own businesses. The college has unearthed a 1960 report card which says about the future Amstrad and Tottenham Hotspur boss: "Alan can do better than this. He has ability, but seems afraid to use it."

Being afraid is not something Sugar is usually accused of. Indeed, he



has not been backward in approaching a whole host of business associates to join him in talking to schools. One surprise success has been with David Potter, the chairman of Pison, who you will remember called off merger talks with Amstrad this time last year.

I AM eagerly awaiting the results of the Retail Week awards, which include Electronic Retail Initiative of the Year, Supply Chain Initiative of the Year and the Customer Satisfaction Excellence Award. On the panel of judges is one person who can be pretty sure she won't be troubled by conflicts of interest because her company is winning all the awards — Ann Pearson of Laura Ashley.

Flight-free

TOMORROW'S launch of Virgin Bank will be strangely low key. Because, unusually for anything associated with Richard Branson, there will not be a competition to give away free flights on Virgin Atlantic. Why can this be? Was there a lack of space on the planes? Was it felt the bank did not need it? Or perhaps the Royal Bank of Scotland objected to the Virgin promotion. Whatever, I hear there have been some interesting behind-the-scenes discussions between the bearded one and his Scottish associates.

ON THE move again in Nigel Hawkins, the former Hoare Govett utilities guru who has been putting pen to paper at Yamachi Securities. Yamachi is "downsizing" in London and Hawkins is shifting to rival broker Williams de Broe. Hawkins is an avowed Tory who once stood against Tony Blair. Seeing that this may not help his prospects for government work, Hawkins recently started following the football sector.

Band backer

A HEARTFELT thank you must be given to Christopher Rodrigues, the boss of the awedly mutual Bradford & Bingley Building Society, who has

been persuaded to divert some of his members' money towards helping the venerable Yorkshire institution, the Black Dyke Mill Brass Band. Though it was never a chart-topper, like its arch rival the Brighouse & Raistrick, the Black Dyke Band is famous the world over for its distinctive brand of music, which featured in the film *Brassed Off*. A week today will see the Black Dyke Band playing in the building society's home town of Bingley, appearing at the Bingley Baptist Church. The band should be keyed up. They play a gala concert at the Albert Hall this weekend.



"I used to be unemployed. Now I'm only a seasonal adjustment"

Letters to the Business and Finance section of The Times can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

New chief named at Hongkong Telecom

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

DICK BROWN, chief executive of Cable & Wireless, has been appointed chairman of Hongkong Telecom communications as part of the London-based international group's campaign to develop its business relationship with China.

After the handover of Hong Kong it was felt appropriate to have the top C&W executive as chairman of Hongkong Telecom. As a result, Brian Smith, who became chairman of Cable & Wireless and Hongkong Telecom in November 1995 after the departure of Lord Young of Graffham, will stand down from the

Hongkong Telecom role. He will stay as a non-executive director and remain chairman of Cable & Wireless.

As part of the board changes in Hong Kong two new non-executive directors have been appointed. One is Li Ping, vice-chairman and chief operating officer of China Telecom (Hong Kong), a cellular services provider in two regions of China. In June, China's Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, ultimate parent of China Telecom (Hong Kong) took a 5.5 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom. Hong Kong's only full-service telecommunications provider.

So far there has been no board representation for a unit of China Everbright Holdings, controlled by China's State Council, which has a 7.74 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom. Linus Cheung, Hongkong Telecom chief executive, said yesterday that in future the structure and composition of the board would be reviewed regularly and there might be either additions or deletions.

Cable & Wireless already has a number of joint projects in China including a marine cable-laying operation. But at the moment foreign companies are prevented from taking equity stakes in Chinese telecommunications organisations.

This rule was recently waived to allow an international placement of shares as part of the flotation of China Telecom (Hong Kong). The international placement was believed to have been 20 times subscribed by Tuesday's deadline for applications by institutional investors.

Dealing in American depositary shares of China Telecom are scheduled to start in New York on October 22 and in Hong Kong the next day.

Cable & Wireless would be interested in taking equity stakes in Chinese telecommunications if the rules are changed to allow it.



Hands on: Dick Brown will aim to develop the company's business relationship with China

Retailer's property warning

By Our Business Staff

THE commercial property market is in danger of sliding back into recession because of overdevelopment of shopping centres, according to Arnold Ziff, chairman of Stylo, the shoe retailer.

Mr Ziff told a meeting of the National Association of Estate Agents yesterday: "The recession that the property world went through in 1987 is fast approaching simply because of the tremendous amount of shopping centre developments that are taking place."

He said Britain was in danger of becoming "truly over-shopped". Also head of Town Centre Securities, the property group, Mr Ziff said that oversupply would lead to a downturn in business for developers, whose "extreme disappointment" would be shared by "institutions who invest their funds heavily in property".

Advertisements appeal to a captive audience

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

AN ADVERTISING company has discovered a fertile new arena for its advertisements — on the back of toilet cubicle doors and at eye level on urinal walls.

The adverts have been launched this week in the lavatories of shopping centres and motorway service areas.

Loaded, the young men's magazine, features heavily in the new EyeSite adverts in male lavatories; Aristot Hosiery in female washrooms; and Johnson & Johnson in baby changing areas in shopping centres and motorway services.

"They do hit you. You can't avoid them," said Andy Wignore for Admedia, which was set up in 1995 to explore new forms of advertising. The

company called in Aric Sigman, a consultant psychologist, to identify new advertising opportunities.

Dr Sigman realised that the ideal environment to stimulate purchasing would be one where consumers were in "a retail state of mind" but where there was also sensory deprivation. He ruled out the pub as an advertising location because people were not bored, possibly not sober and were hardly in a retail frame of mind. Cinema advertising is directed at an audience sitting in the dark who cannot move to buy any of the things advertised.

The search led to the rest rooms of shopping centres and the backs of cubicle doors where people will read anything, even the most unfunny graffiti, and they are often in the middle of a two or three-hour shopping expedition.

Admedia is now selling national advertising packages in 160 of the biggest and busiest shopping centres, where it estimates 102 million male impacts — one male seeing one ad — a year, and 193 million female impacts.

Research suggests that between 82 per cent and 95 per cent of visitors to motorway service stations use the washrooms. Admedia believes that to add up to more than 228 million male impacts and 211 million female impacts a year.

National campaigns already booked on EyeSite include: Lipton Cosmetics and Acclaim Computer Software.

Business channels near to merger

By Our Media Editor

EUROPE'S two 24-hour business television channels, CNBC Europe and European Business News, are close to a merger because of the difficulties of establishing a pan-European business TV business.

Both services, which operate out of London, are believed to be heavy loss-makers. EBN is a joint venture between the Dow Jones organisation and Flextech, the cable and satellite channel group. CNBC is a wholly owned subsidiary of NBC, the US TV network.

The aim is to try to complete a global deal between the two companies, which would include the Dow Jones television network in the Far East, Asia Business News, by the middle of next month.

The CNBC name would survive the planned merger. It is likely that in Europe a lot of EBN's programme making capability would survive. It is less clear what would happen to FT TV, part of Pearson Television, which supplies the morning segment of CNBC's European output.

As a 30 per cent shareholder in EBN, Flextech would have a blocking vote in any deal.

Flotation to make chief £3.8m

MARLBOROUGH International, Ireland's largest recruitment firm, said David McKenna, its managing director, will make £3.85 million through its planned flotation in London and Dublin.

Mr McKenna bought the business name in liquidation in 1992 for £5,000. The group is due to float on the Alternative Investment Market in London and the developing companies market in Dublin. After the float Mr McKenna will hold a 52.95 per cent stake in the group.

The group said it plans to issue 10,416,666 ordinary shares at 96 Irish pence (96.5p) each to raise £1,000 million (£894 million, net of expenses). Of this, the group will receive £4.99 million and Mr McKenna the remaining £3.85 million.

Lasmo funds project through debentures

LASMO, the oil and gas exploration company, may sell \$600 million (£372 million) in guaranteed debentures, which will be used mainly to fund the company's entry into Venezuela for a field redevelopment project. Lasmo will file a preliminary prospectus supplement with the US Securities & Exchange Commission for the possible sale of the debentures, which are expected to be in two tranches of 20 and 40-year maturity.

Lasmo said exploration activity over the 70 per cent of the Dacion area that is unexplored is expected to offer further material reserves potential. The company said its development plan for the first phase of the project targets increasing production from the known discoveries to 90,000 barrels per day by 2001. Lasmo's share of the proved reserve base will be about 175 million barrels of oil at December 31.

Mulberry store plan

MULBERRY GROUP plans to open its first standalone store, Mulberry Home Store, in King's Road, Chelsea, where Mulberry has recently acquired an 8,000 sq ft store. The company said the latest store, which is due to open in November, will display an extensive selection of Mulberry products. The total cost of the lease and the conversion of the store is expected to be as low as £100,000. Mulberry shares remained unchanged at 121½p yesterday.

Total Vietnamese deal

TOTAL, the French oil group, has obtained a licence to build a \$6 million (£3.7 million) liquefied petroleum gas bottling plant in a joint venture with the state-owned Sea Products 404 in the Mekong Delta of southern Vietnam. Total will own 60 per cent and Sea Products 404 the other 40 per cent. The plant is expected to come on stream at the beginning of 1999. Total already has two similar plants, in the northern port of Haiphong and Ho Chi Minh city in the south.

T&S bid unconditional

T&S STORES has received acceptance for its offer for M&W, the rival convenience store group, in respect of 16.3 million shares, representing 96.68 per cent of M&W shares. Of the total received by Tuesday's first closing date in the bid timetable, holders of 9.3 million shares had opted to take cash — the remainder having taken loan notes. The offer has therefore become unconditional as to acceptances but will remain open until October 23. T&S Stores rose 2p to 192½p.

Blockleys back in black

BLOCKLEYS, the building materials group, returned to the black in the first half, registering a £127,000 pre-tax profit in the six months ended June 30, compared with a £54,000 loss. Earnings recovered to 0.34p from a 0.16p a share loss and a half-year dividend of 0.15p (Op) will be paid. Brian Taylor, the chairman, said: "While the first half of the year represented an improvement... current indications are that the extent of this upturn will not be maintained during the second half."

TayWood guarantee

THE Export Credits Guarantee Department, Britain's official export credit agency, said it will guarantee a \$200 million (£123.6 million) loan provided to help a venture, comprising a subsidiary of Taylor Woodrow, the builder and contractor, and Skanska Construction, the Swedish building and construction giant, to construct a transport and commercial centre in St Petersburg. The ECGD said the loan is to be arranged by Credit Agricole Indosuez and SBC Warburg Dillon Read.

ACCOUNTANCY

Arm's length is too distant

Allan Taylor examines the impact of applying the self-assessment rules to company transfer pricing

Self-assessment is already here for individuals. Within 18 months, it is scheduled for companies. Last Thursday an Inland Revenue consultative document gave us details of how the biggest international tax issue of all — transfer pricing — will fit into that regime.

Currently UK members of multinational groups have no obligation to declare profits for tax purposes using so-called "arm's-length" prices for goods, services, finance or intangible assets sold to other members of their group overseas. Hard-pressed governments, keen to protect their tax take, consider the matter is of great importance. The US and Australian Governments have been rigorous in insisting that companies sell at the same prices to group members as to third parties.

In the current UK system, tax inspectors monitor tax returns and only if the Revenue Board gives its approval, a so-called direction, can company profits be adjusted. Under self-assessment, it will be the obligation of multinationals to adjust the profits it declares for any intra-group transactions not made on what the Revenue is satisfied is an arm's-length basis. Experi-

ence from Australia and the US tells us that revenue authorities tend to increase audit and investigations activity once self-assessment commences. The Revenue's own figures show that for every £1 spent on investigations of transfer pricing, £120 is recovered in extra tax. Transfer pricing, once self-assessment starts, will undoubtedly be a key area for investigation under the Government's Spend to Save initiative.

One of the key areas of such inquiries will be documentation — it will be incumbent on every company to keep details of all intra-group transactions. The Revenue has largely dismissed this issue but, with 25 different sets of documentation set out in the consultative document, this will be more of a compliance burden than they give credit for.

Under the present system, there are no penalties. But with the new proposals, companies not adjusting profits to the Revenue's satisfaction risk substantial penalties. It should also be remembered that reducing a group member's profits can change the financial data upon which management decisions are based.

But how likely are companies to go wrong? Considering trans-



Allan Taylor says disagreements are almost certain

fer pricing is an inherently subjective area — there is no right or wrong transfer price — disagreements are almost certain. And the Revenue has certainly taken the opportunity to extend the legislation heralded in July's Budget. For a start, we can no longer just talk

about transfer "prices". The consultative document introduces a new concept — "arm's-length provisions" — which is not satisfactorily defined or explained. It appears to bring all the terms and conditions of inter-company transactions into the picture, such as the length of

an agreement which might be amended to satisfy arm's-length principles. This would appear to be another area of likely problems.

Far more transactions have now been brought into the transfer pricing net — all financial transactions will be included, such as loans guaranteed by a parent company, which is not currently affected. The proposals intend to disallow interest on part of a bank loan which the Revenue believes has only been made because of the comfort zone provided by the affiliate.

The same schedule also extends the definition of "control" significantly, from its current limitation to control by shares, voting power or articles to "control by any means". Under this definition, control will also include 40 per cent participation in a joint venture.

The Revenue points out that its motivation is one of fairness. After all, if one company follows arm's-length principles to the letter so should another.

But what happens to the firm that reports its accounting profits properly but has not adjusted them for arm's-length? Will they have past years' assessments reopened? Bringing transfer pricing into self-assessment is a shift of responsibility from tax authority to taxpayer and there are questions raised by the document that need to be answered.

Allan Taylor is UK head of transfer pricing at KPMG.

As vermouth skips past a dry Martini

INVESTORS have traditionally been poorly served by accountants. The company news that an investor sees in the financial pages of a newspaper are the figures that have received the lightest of touches from an independent auditor. The figures that the auditor will have the greatest impact upon are the ones that rarely appear in the papers. It is partly history that is to blame. All those arguments about accountants looking at the past rather than the future are true. The full report and accounts are the figures that bear the heaviest impress from an auditor's thumb. They are published months after the time to which they relate and, because they contain no headline figures that have not been announced before, they are ignored by the newspapers. Analysts are no better. They may claim that they go through the mass of figures with an analytical toothcomb. But generally they are too busy breaking the news of someone else's preliminary figures, which will drive the day's dealing, to be bothered with what appears to be old news. It is a pity. It was Polly Peck, International, that famously included the relevant figures and explanations of accounting policies deep in the notes which, if read perceptively, could be found to contain the seeds of the company's destruction.

The figures that investors, and sometimes share prices, jump to are companies' preliminary announcements and their interim results. Both skip past the auditors in the same way that vermouth skips past a dry Martini. The presence can be discerned in the air, but not much in the substance of the matter. Interim results do not have to be audited. Preliminary figures only need to be agreed by the auditors.

The result is that to all intents and purposes the second half of most companies' financial years are never properly analysed or publicised. There is some analysis of the full year's figures when the annual report comes out. There is some analysis of the first half, when the interim report is published. But the second half is lost in the heady process of stripping out the headline figures for the full year from the preliminary results. The result is that investors can read some good analysis of the first half and some reasonable analysis of the full year. What no one can properly get their hands on is analysis of the second half of the year as a distinct period. And this, as all auditors know, is a pity because typically all the

nasties are tucked away into the second half.

So the current efforts by the Accounting Standards Board (ASB) should be applauded and encouraged. In the past three weeks it has published a guidance statement on interim reports and proposals for what it calls a "best practice" statement on preliminary results. The importance of this area of reporting is likely to grow enormously in coming years. The full year's reports and accounts, which have grown in size in recent years, will increasingly be consigned to their correct place as reference material. But as the influence and possibilities of technology have a greater effect on financial reporting it is likely that it is the most immediate and urgent figures that will become the focus of attention.

Hence the need to bring some order and guidance to them now. The ASB is treading carefully. It sees this as an area like the operating and financial review, another crucial item of financial reporting, but one where best practice rather than mandatory rules drive the quality of the information.

The problem is that there are two opposing forces at work. These are the users and preparers of accounts. The users increasingly want the information in as clear and timely a form as possible. The preparers, somewhat strangely, still argue that all this speed, efficiency and clarity is irksome. The draft guidance on preliminary announcements suggests that "companies should be encouraged to issue their preliminary announcement within 60 days of the year-end". Given that some giant American corporations manage the announcement within 12 working days, that does not seem onerous. Yet the ASB found considerable opposition. "There will be an enormous argy-bargy over this," one member said. Allan Cook, technical director, said: "Quite a lot of people will be jumping up and down over that."

Equally, there is likely to be opposition to the idea that companies should explore methods of getting preliminary announcements to all of their shareholders at the same time. Currently, companies send them to those people, such as institutional shareholders and analysts, who can do them a bit of good in the market. Ordinary shareholders tend not to be sent them as a matter of course.

As with so much in financial reporting, it is the companies and their finance directors who are the most short-sighted of all.



ROBERT BRUCE

Crunch time at Somerset House

THE Inland Revenue, recovering from its influx of self-assessment forms, should take notice. In the latest issue of *Taxation Practitioner*, the magazine of the Chartered Institute of Taxation, the institute president, John Andrews, of Coopers & Lybrand, issues a warning. He suggests that tax advisers may currently be all nice and smug about self-assessment, but he says that may not last too long. "When the real crunch comes next January and taxpayers are being regarded as failures in

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

not coping with the system," he says, "the Inland Revenue may not be able to remember how hard it was to comply." Members are asked to send in a "selection of some of the nonsense" that they are suffering. And next January they will be dropped from a great height on Somerset House.

Open or closed?

WORRIED staff at the English ICA are looking for a sign. The Gerrard report into the governance of the institute

called for all manner of sweeping changes, in particular examining the way in which the secretariat tends to multiply in the amount of dissatisfaction that members register. Next month the institute's council is to debate the actions it intends to take over the report. It has yet to be decided whether or not this will be done during the first, open, section of the meeting, or behind closed doors. The omens are not good. During the previous discussions of Gerrard even the

institute's chief executive was barred from the meeting. But there is a suggestion that the nature of the day of the meeting may determine the issue. Guy Fawkes Day is not thought to be a good time for rulers to upset the ruled.

Plenty of nothings

JOHN WHITING, head of tax at Price Waterhouse, has invented a new classification of taxable items. He calls them "nothings". These are items of expenditure that seem valid to

you or me but which get no tax relief. Under the aegis of the Chartered Institute of Taxation, he has prepared a 65-page report detailing more than 280 different "nothings" to be sent to the Inland Revenue. For example, if an employee loses his job and pays for outplacement counselling he cannot claim it against tax. But if his former employer pays for the service it will be free of tax for the employee and tax deductible for the employer. Whiting wants a proper review of "nothings". Like all good tax advisers he wants something for "nothings".

ROBERT BRUCE

Chief to go as sterling puts the squeeze on Tie Rack

By Sarah Cunningham

THE strong pound has led to a sharp fall in half-year profits at Tie Rack, the accessories retailer.

The company, which has 249 of its 419 stores overseas, said that the strength of sterling had lopped about £500,000 off its interim pre-tax profit and will also hit earnings in the second half.

The company also announced that Nigel McGinley is stepping down as chief executive in February. Mr McGinley, who will not receive any compensation payment from the company, will stay on as a non-executive director and a consultant.

His duties will be shared by Brita Eickhoff, who joins the board as joint managing director, and Ronnie Flax, who will move from retail director to joint managing director.

Martin Morgan, property director, will become deputy chairman with responsibility for property and international business. Roy Bishko, chairman, said his own responsibilities will not change as a result of Mr McGinley's departure.

Pre-tax profit in the six months to August 17 fell from £604,000 to £158,000. Turnover crept up 0.5 per cent to £48.9 million, but was 7 per cent ahead at constant exchange rates.

Despite the profits setback, the company is continuing its expansion programme and also plans to step up the pace of store refurbishments.

The company will pay an unchanged interim dividend of 0.6p on January 13. Its shares fell 4½p to 127½p.



Expansion still the aim for new Tie Rack team: from left, Martin Morgan, Roy Bishko, Brita Eickhoff and Ronnie Flax

Blunders over factory cost Ferguson £500,000

By Fraser Nelson

FERGUSON International, Britain's largest label manufacturer, admitted that management blunders have cost the company £500,000 in the past six months alone.

Stephen Gutteridge, the new chief executive, said problems with moving its main label factory had forced the group's pre-tax profits down to £4.46 million (£5.99 million) in the half year to August 31.

He coupled the news with a warning that September orders had been much slower, making a full-year recovery unlikely. The shares dropped 31½p to a new low of 118½p as analysts downgraded full-year forecasts from £10.6 million to

£8 million — putting the company on course for its worst results for five years.

Mr Gutteridge said: "There was a poor management process with a lack of control in key areas. Moving factory is a complex process — we did not adequately plan the move, in order to meet targets. With the advantage of hindsight it was not well managed at all."

He added that the half-time figures included a "modest" payoff to David Watson, his predecessor, who resigned in July.

The new factory, which generates £25 million of sales a year, is up and running, but disruptions in every part of the label process forced the com-

pany to put on a series of overnight runs and incur other expenses to meet deadlines.

The company blamed its September slowdown on poor summer retail sales. It claims to have about 20 per cent of the clothing labels market, and 25 per cent of the trade for self-adhesive supermarket labels.

Earnings are expected to be 13.7p, barely covering the 13.3p of dividend that the company has promised to maintain. In July the company said that its operating profits would be "close" to £10.6 million.

Mr Gutteridge, who has been in the job for two weeks, said the company had suffered six months of problems and was preparing for six months

of stabilisation. He is not planning to mount a recovery until the next financial year.

In spite of the troubles with its underlying business, the company is still pressing ahead with its startup label factories in China and Sri Lanka — although they are still loss-making, with no profit expected until 1999.

The company is to produce a third-quarter report to calm nervous investors. Its shares have already lost half their value this year.

Earnings dropped to 8p (10.1p) a share, from which an interim dividend of 4.5p will be paid on December 5.

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British adviser on US fraud charges gives himself up

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN SAN FRANCISCO

A FUGITIVE investment adviser suspected of cheating elderly clients and banks of millions of dollars surrendered to American authorities.

The FBI had feared that Donald Bickerstaff, 38, had fled to Britain while under investigation for bank fraud. As a British citizen, he could not have been extradited.

George Grotz, an FBI spokesman, said Mr Bickerstaff, who faces two charges of bank fraud, turned himself in with his lawyer to Michael Yamaguchi, the US Attorney. "He will be afforded an initial

appearance tomorrow before US magistrate Maria-Elena James," Mr Grotz said.

Mr Bickerstaff left a wife and two children behind in his Mill Valley home in August as civil suits and federal agents closed in. He did business in the San Diego and San Francisco areas under the names Bickerstaff Associates and BFA Financial Services Inc.

An arrest warrant accuses him of defrauding federally insured banks by taking out up to \$800,000 (£490,000) in loans shortly before he fled. But the FBI investigation

has broadened to include accusations that Mr Bickerstaff cheated his investment clients by issuing them phony brokerage statements. He used similar statements as collateral for his loans with Pacific Bank, the FBI said.

The FBI is uncertain how many clients Mr Bickerstaff had, but estimates the number at close to 100. Mr Bickerstaff was fined \$50,000 in 1995 by the National Association of Securities Dealers for falsifying a customer's signature and making false representations over an insurance policy.

Promoting 'sound finance' can seriously damage your wealth

For Keynesians, the most important single objective of economic policy is to reduce, and, where possible, entirely eliminate, the needless economic and social waste caused by idle productive resources, notably by unemployment. For this reason Keynesian economists and politicians who claim to be dedicated to the goal of full employment should be opposed to European monetary union, EMU, as envisaged in the Maastricht Treaty, explicitly fails to address the problem of unemployment and under-utilisation of resources. The main economic objectives of EMU seem to be the maintenance of price stability and the promotion of what Keynes called "sound finance", meaning tight fiscal and monetary policies regardless of economic circumstances. These objectives are clearly reflected in the Treaty's convergence criteria, which set maximum limits to inflation, budget deficits and public debt, but say nothing about maintaining employment or stabilising economic cycles.

Keynesians should all speak out against EMU says Eprime Eshag

sive reason for Keynesians to reject EMU.

But staying out of EMU will only save Britain from the folly of undertaking an international legal commitment to "sound finance" targets, as specified in the Maastricht convergence criteria. It will not, unfortunately, put an end to the unnecessary economic sacrifices imposed on the British people by domestically imposed "sound finance" targets, as long as both political parties remain firmly committed to monetarism. Perhaps the most depressing and, for Keynesians, irrational feature of the present economic scene in Britain and much of the rest of the industrial world is the simultaneous sight of two contradictory phenomena. Potentially very rich countries plead lack of resources as a reason for failing to cater to the basic needs of their people for health, education and shelter and for cutting essential social services and welfare. Yet these same countries are willing to tolerate the waste of even greater resources due to the unemployment caused by arbitrary financial targets.

All this has serious political implications. There is a real danger that the persistent commitment to monetarist "sound finance" targets by major industrial countries, whether through EMU or independently, will prolong the depressed conditions in the world economy. Such conditions provide a fertile ground for the growth of crime as well as of extreme right-wing, racist and anti-foreigner nationalist political movements. Well-meaning Germans, shocked by the votes cast for neo-Nazis in Hamburg's recent election and wondering what has happened to their country's post-war liberal consensus, might do well to reflect on the impact of monetarism, EMU and "sound finance".

□ The author is Emeritus Fellow, Wadham College, Oxford



Keynes: cut social waste

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CHANGING TIMES

Olsen floats its energy offshoot

FRED OLSEN Energy ASA opened on the Oslo bourse at 193 crowns (£16.90) per share. The company provides drilling, floating production and fabrication services for the offshore oil and gas industry and was formed earlier this year from the oil industry interests of Fred Olsen, the Norwegian shipping and oil services group.

Fred Olsen Energy activities include a large shareholding in Harland and Wolff, the Belfast shipyard, Dolphin Drilling in Aberdeen, Dolphin of Norway, and a stake in Callon Petroleum in the United States.

The share capital in Fred Olsen Energy is 1.16 billion crowns.

New prawn cocktail on Beefeater menu

By Dominic Walsh

PRAWN cocktail, a staple of the Beefeater menu for the past 23 years, is to be given a makeover as part of a £50 million revamp of the chain by Whitbread, its parent company.

Simon Wood, Beefeater managing director, said the brand was being repositioned to recognise the transformation of the eating-out market over the past few years.

He added: "It's no longer a treat reserved for special occasions. New freedom means everyone can eat outside the home as well as a normal part of modern life. This, in turn, has led to greater competition and to greater expectations from customers."

After extensive research and trials, the group's 300-strong

chain of restaurants is to be updated — from staff uniforms and training to food. There will also be a new TV advertising campaign. While keen to distance itself from the old steakhouse image, the group will continue to focus on classic British staples.

Eric Hanson, the brand's food development manager and a former leading chef, said prawn cocktail would remain on the menu. "We've taken it and improved it. It will have more height, fresher flavours, better colours and, actually, more prawns."

But there was bad news for black forest gâteau lovers. Mr Hanson said there were no plans, for the time being, to reintroduce it to the menu.

"Is there a major Internet provider that wasn't born in the USA?"

With most Internet providers, talking about football or dogs can cause serious misunderstandings. Being based in the States means that their chat rooms and forums have a distinct American flavour. Or rather, flavor. LineOne, on the other hand, is a British information and Internet service which focuses on British interests and issues.

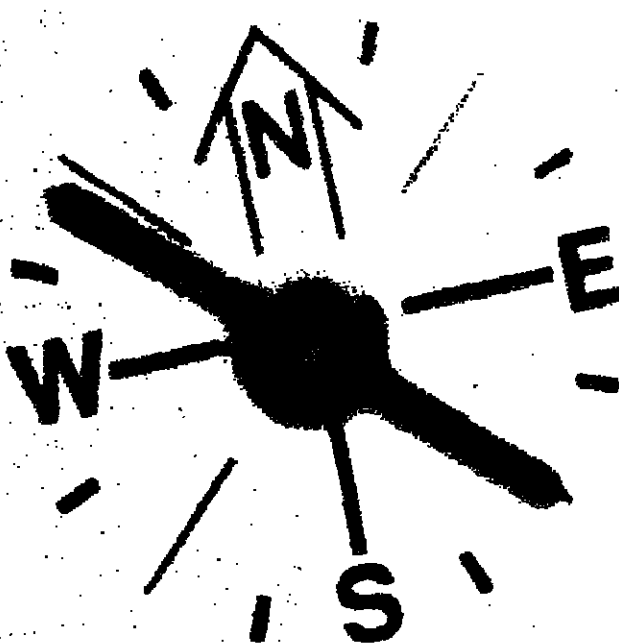
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Signs of upswing for the economy

Overseas portfolio investment into India's bullish stock markets continues to rise, writes Sunil Jain

On the face of it, things could not get much worse for the Indian economy. The Government has just given in and handed over an additional annual bonanza of 36 billion rupees (about £6 billion) to agitating central Government employees in the form of a salary revision.

The economy is yet to recover from last year's slowdown. Tax collections are low as a result, and with the constituents of the ruling United Front (UF) exerting all their influence to increase subsidies, the Finance Minister's efforts to contain the fiscal deficit have clearly been hit for six.

It is also equally unlikely that much of the ground lost since the Union budget on the economic reforms front will be recovered, with Prime Minister I.K. Gujral's near-complete inability to stand up to the UF. Hence, the slowdown in the process of disinvestment in public sector enterprises and in closing down some of the chronically sick ones.

Even so, there are enough signs to indicate that the economy is on the upswing and that investors are right in not panicking just now. Not the least is the fact that India looks like an especially good investment if one considers the currency turmoil in South-East Asia and the structural weaknesses shown up as a result of this in countries such as Thailand and Malaysia.

Most important, however, from the point of view of investors, will be the impact of the recent pay rise to government employees and the favourable agricultural crop. The sharp reduction in taxes in the budget is estimated to have released an additional 47 billion rupees into the economy. This, along with the Pay Commission bonanza would add, over the next couple of years, about 1.52 per cent to overall economic growth, according to economists.

As a result, stock valuations also look especially good. While stating that "this time, it's for real", economists at the broking house HSBC B & K (the Indian arm of HSBC Bank project that company earnings

will be up 16.7 per cent this year as against 1.2 per cent last year. Price-earnings ratios are 30 per cent more attractive than they were three years ago, the last time the stock markets seemed so bullish. Not surprisingly, overseas portfolio investment into Indian stock markets continues to rise.

While the picture remains mixed in terms of reduction in bureaucratic red-tape and appalling, so far as infrastructure is concerned, the recent oil-sector reforms have opened up avenues for direct or manufacturing sector investment. Investment in power and telecoms, though stuck a little for the time being, also offer scope for big investment.

British Gas (BG) has recently bought into Gujarat Gas, giving it access to an established distribution network supplying to customers in Gujarat — BG already supplies gas to households in Bombay through another tie-up. With price controls on gas now being lifted, the fuel is emerging as the front-runner for power plants and BG is clearly on to a good thing. In fact, much of the big investment proposed by multinationals such as Shell, Amoco and Enron is for setting up gas terminals and pipeline systems to supply to power plants across the country.

Firms such as British Petroleum are also likely to benefit from the Government committing itself to removing the administered price mechanism which restricted prices and therefore investment in the petroleum sector.

National Grid, with its tie-up with the Power Grid Corporation, is clearly another company which will benefit once the policy on transmission of power evolves further.

While urban water supply and sewerage is emerging as an area that has enormous potential with several state governments privatising these services — Anglian Water has bid for two such projects in Goa and Tamil Nadu — the progress on telecoms and insurance is certain to be slower.

● The author is the Business Editor of The Indian Express.



Controlled by mobsters and dirty money, the Bollywood film factory churns out unlimited violence and as much sex as the censor will allow



India's production of modern goods such as washing machines is raising expectations

Bollywood's erotic trash

There is nothing so violent as a Bollywood movie, with its mutilations, rapes, knifings and other elaborate atrocities wrapped around thin story lines that throw in a bit of sex (only a bit, because the censors say sex is bad). A man's innards can grace the screen, but not a woman's breast.

These are aspects of the Indian film industry that will not be dwelt upon during the Queen's visit to MGR film City today but they are the subject of battles between film-makers and moral guardians in the Government. Bollywood, whose films pour out of Bombay, occasionally breaks out of the old song-dance-and-fight routine with something containing merit. But such occasions immediately present problems of censorship and finding money to distribute the film.

Bollywood thrives on black money. A film-maker who tries to be honest faces frustration, because honest money is hard to find. The mobsters who finance much of the industry lay down the rules: make a movie for the masses by throwing in as much sex as the censors will allow and let the blood flow.

This formula explains why Indian films are so crass. India has world-class talent, but low-class money to back it. When a different kind of film is made, the censors usually ban it with objections that dismay producers and directors. Train to Pakistan, a skilful and serious film by Pamela Brooks, summarises the clash between those trying to make good movies and those suspicious of anything that breaks the mould.

The censor board did not like a scene showing a man's

bare buttocks. It disliked the quip of a man who said "and I suppose Mahatma Gandhi is your uncle", a line that was deemed disrespectful.

It is a blunt film, conveying a story of heroism in Punjab during partition in 1947, and shows in one scene the torture of a suspected spy with chilli peppers in the anus. That alone would have given it an adults-only rating in the West. The cuts the Indian censors wanted would have emasculated it.

Honest investors do not want to risk money on a good film that censors destroy on the presumption that the nation is too innocent to see a man's backside, but not too sensitive to see him mutilated with a cleaver. Similarly, state television is a numbing outpouring of mediocrity, produced by people too conscious of censorship to be creative or risk innovation.

The censors are out of step with an India that no longer accepts the sexual mores imposed by the Moguls, and then the British, who together forced prudery on a nation that produced the Kama Sutra, as well as erotic temple carvings depicting everything from group sex to bestiality.

The censor board is becoming a national joke because of its capricious and nannyish definitions of good taste. It lost the battle to destroy Bandit Queen, which showed nakedness, after the producers took the case to appeal. The censors are a relic and are slowly being compelled by public opinion to allow greater freedom. In due course, a male backside is bound to grace India's cinema screens, and nobody is likely to faint.

CHRISTOPHER THOMAS

Garments with a timeless quality

FASHION

THE SARI conjures up the image of India as much as the Taj Mahal or spicy curry, Coomi Kapoor writes.

"The sari is an all-purpose garment," says Gayatri Subramaniam, a librarian who has never felt the need to wear anything else. "You can sleep in it. You can cover your head with it if it's sunny or rainy. You don't have to bother about keeping up with fickle fashion styles or worrying whether it still fits you. You don't have to deal with torn seams or stuck zips."

However, the sari is gradually being replaced in the wardrobes of urban Indian women by another very Indian outfit, the kurta. The traditional dress of Punjab in northwest India, it combines a loose shirt (kurta) with a pyjama and a veil (chunni) to cover the head or cleavage.

In the past two decades the kurta has been reinvented. The baggy suit has been transformed into dozens of chic styles and cuts.

The revival has coincided with the fashion revolution in India. Young designers such as the late Rohit Khosla, Rohit



Miss World in a sari at the contest in India last year

Bal, Tarun Tahiliani, Ritu Beri, Abu Jani, Sandeep Khosla and J.J. Valaya have breathed new life into the kurta. Beauty queens — in 1994 Indian women won both Miss World and Miss Universe contests wearing designer Indian garments — and Indian fashion shows abroad have helped to fuel international interest. Haute couture designers such as Issac Mijake, Ungaro, Escada and Valentino have made use of Indian fabrics and embroidery in their collections.

The National Institute of Fashion Technology in Delhi was opened by the Government in 1988 with an eye on the burgeoning garment export business, but it discovered there was as big a demand for designers in the domestic market as there was for export. By 1995 NIFT had opened four more design schools. Fashion is booming in India.

The nature of the average Indian politician is changing, Coomi Kapoor reports

Leaders become more like the common man

The Indian press often decries the erosion of values in politics.

Front pages are dominated by opportunistic defections, politicians' links with criminals and various scams. A common complaint is that there are no longer role models such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Balraj Prasad and Lal Bahadur Shastri to look up to.

The Speaker of India's lower house of Parliament (Lok Sabha), P.A. Sangma, has even suggested special classes for new MPs in parliamentary procedure, in view of the frequent adjournments and slanging-matches.

However, statistics indicate that there has been a steady improvement in the educational background of MPs over the past 40 years. In 1952, 23 per cent of MPs had not completed higher secondary school; in 1991 this applied to only 3.6 per cent of the House. In 1952, 58 per cent of the MPs had university degrees; in 1991, 76 per cent were graduates.

During the past 50 years, the profile of the average Indian politician has changed. The late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was in some ways typical of an earlier generation of politicians: Aristocratic, autocratic, upper-caste, educated at Oxford University, she had all the inherent advantages and social graces associated with membership of a leading political family.

Today the best-known woman politician in India is Mayawati, who triumphed over poverty and social discrimination — she comes from the lowest rung of India's caste-stratified society — to become Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. The iconoclastic former primary-school teacher has a contempt for parliamentary niceties.

Seventy-year-old Prime Minister I.K. Gujral represents the old school of "gentleman politicians" which is slowly fading out. The soft-spoken Gujral, when out of office, was a



Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and Laloo Prasad Yadav



Mayawati: India's best-known woman politician

regular at conferences and seminars discussing declining value systems and foreign policy. His political detractors argue that, under normal circumstances, he would find it

Prasad Yadav has a clearly defined constituency of his intermediate-caste brethren which makes him a formidable force in the politics of northern India. Recently Yadav was imprisoned in a corruption case. In the scam in which he was allegedly involved, money from the State exchequer intended to provide animal feed was diverted to the pockets of contractors, officials and politicians.

Yadav claims he is the victim of an upper-caste conspiracy, and instead of stepping down until his name can — he hopes — be cleared, he has installed his wife Rabri Devi, a mother of nine, as his surrogate. In the commercial capital of Bombay, it is the saffron-robed, tough-talking Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray who holds sway, playing unabashedly to Hindu and parochial sentiments in a city which once prided itself on its cosmopolitan culture. In the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, the computer buff Chandrababu Naidu is Chief Minister and, like most of the younger generation of politicians, has no use for the white khadi cap, popularised by Mahatma Gandhi, and once the characteristic badge of an Indian politician.

The changing profile of politicians is not necessarily a sign of declining standards, but rather of changing priorities. MPs from the urban elite are being slowly nudged out by greater numbers representing the interests of the intermediate and lower castes, whose numerical strength was not adequately represented in earlier Parliaments.

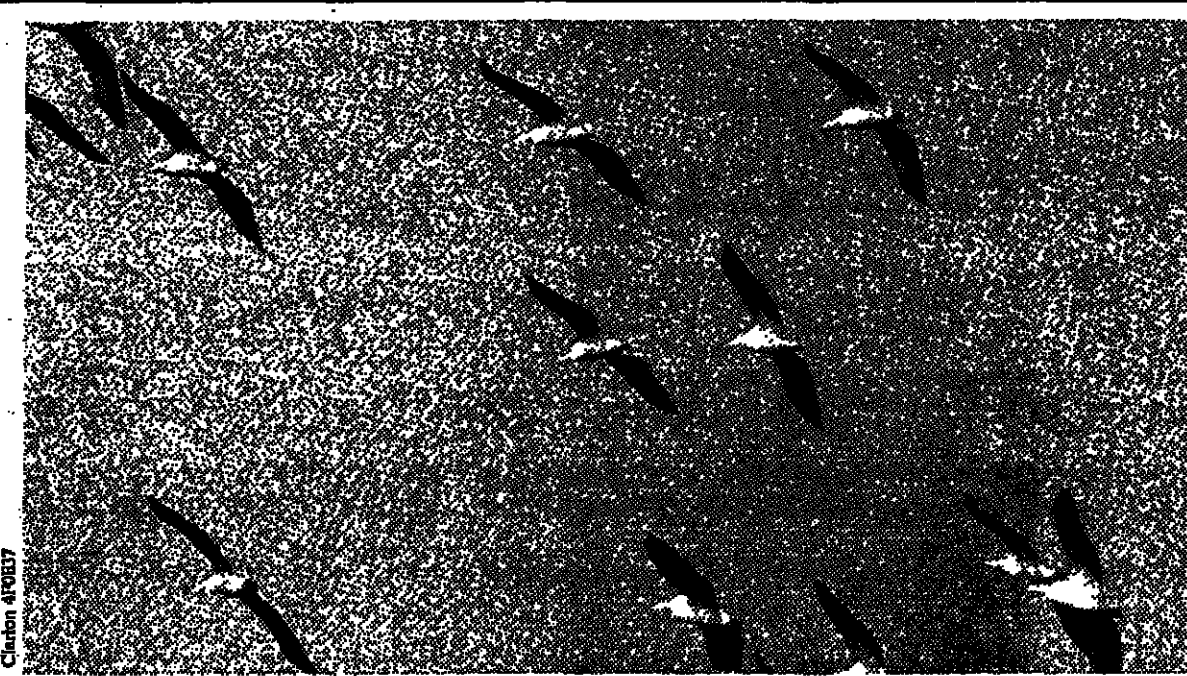
Today's MPs are exercised not so much about the quality of parliamentary debate and complex procedural knots of legislation but about providing drinking water and building better roads. Caste and regional loyalties often take priority over larger national issues. Along the way, politicians have become more genuinely representative and reflective of the electorate as a whole.

In contrast, the former Chief Minister of Bihar, Laloo

GETTING THERE

BRITISH Airways and Air India both operate direct flights to Delhi and Bombay from the UK. Steve Keenan writes. BA flies direct to Madras and runs connecting flights to Calcutta via Delhi. Fares bought from airlines can cost more than £1,000 at peak times. Bought through an agent, they can drop by more than half. May-July is the cheapest time to travel, says Sue Moscow of Trailfinders, which quotes £299 to Delhi and Bombay with KLM via Amsterdam. Direct fares start at £450. Austrian Airlines fly daily to Delhi from Vienna from October 28.

A 6.35am Heathrow flight will pick up the Delhi flight at 10.30am, arriving at 10.20pm. Travellers this week quoted advance purchase fares of £389 plus tax. The Indian High Commission (0171-836 8494) says only six-month visas, costing £26, are available.



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Bargains of the week — Shopping in Toronto, elephant festivals in India, and Sri Lanka for the Christmas fortnight

A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and further afield, many at bargain prices.

FIVE NIGHTS on the Isles of Scilly and travel by land, air and sea feature on a Shaw Coaches' tour leaving from the Peterborough area next Wednesday. Take the coach to Penzance, a helicopter to St Mary's and cruise around the

BRITAIN

islands. It is priced from £385 with half-board. Details: 01778 342224.

BOURNEMOUTH missed out on the party conferences this year, and probably as a result the five-star Royal Bath Hotel in Bournemouth is offering a £32 a night this month. The offer is available through Superbreak, and includes use of the health club. Details: 0161-238 5257.

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI's concert at the Indoor Arena, Manchester, on November 1 is featured in a Musical Break which is on offer from Goldenrail. A ticket, coach

transfer as well as bed and breakfast at the Manchester Post House costs from £199. Details: 0161-238 5206.

THE OLD BELL, Malnesbury, in Wiltshire — the town was once the capital of old England — is available for two-night breaks at £99 from Sunvil UK. The price includes breakfast as well as entrance to Longleat and Stourhead. Children are welcome at little extra cost. Details: 0181-232 9788.

TRY your hand on a Quad bike, JCB or even an amphibious Salzwart at Solo's Off Road Adventure in Northamptonshire on November 7 and 8. All activities and two nights' full board at the Stakis Corby Hotel cost from £239. Insurance is included. Details: 0181-951 2800.

FOLLOW in the footsteps of William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey on a long weekend in the Lake District with Countrywide Holidays for three nights from November 14. Walking tours, as well as talks and most meals in a country guesthouse are included in the £18 price. Details: 0161-446 2226.

EUROPE

MEDITERRANEAN deals are available this month from Co-op Travelcare with the best offers to Ibiza. A week's Sunworld holiday with half-board and a flight from Manchester on Saturday costs £219 and a similar Airtours package with a flight from Cardiff on Sunday costs £149. Details: 0541 500388.

RHODES for £179 for a week's self-catering with a flight from Gatwick on Saturday is the best of several late deals available from Kosmar Holidays. Details: 0181-368 6833.

TURKEY has been one of the best places for bargains this year and Cosmos is keeping up the tradition by offering a week's self-catering in Izmir for £159 with a flight from Gatwick on Monday. Details: 0161-480 5799.

THE SUN should be still shining brightly in Eilat where a week's hotel holiday with B&B from October 27 will cost from £279 with Longwood Holidays including return flights from Luton. Details: 0181-551 4494.

CYCLING for Softies sends out its last group of the season through Provence and the Camargue on October 29. The week-long trip with return flights from Gatwick, half-board, cycle hire and a support team costs from £859. Details: 0161-248 8282.

NICE has been the target for cut-price airlines and EasyJet has stepped up the competition by offering a £39 one-way fare until December 15 on a first-come, first-served basis. Details: 0990 292920.

THE ALGARVE in autumn can be bright and breezy — and cheap if you take up Lunn Poly's offer of a week's self-catering for £159 with a flight from East Midlands on November 3. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

CASABLANCA might never be the same without Bogart and Bergman but you can enjoy free nights in the city next month with Cadogan Holidays. Stay on Friday and Saturday — and Sunday will be free, with the break costing £401 including return flights from Heathrow and a discount card. A week's stay including two free nights costs £587. Details: 01703 823032.



The Elephant Festival in Bihar State, the erotic temples of Khajuraho and the Taj Mahal are included in a 14-day Indian journey with Travelbag Adventures. Fly from Heathrow on November 11. Price, including B&B, from £1,245. Details: 01430 541007

LONG-HAUL

HONG KONG packages have been cut, from £899 to £569 for five nights, until the end of the month by Qantas Holidays. Fly non-stop from Heathrow on any day and stay at the Grand Tower Hotel. Details: 0990 673464.

DISNEY fans can take advantage of an offer from Destination Florida based on four sharing, with flights, next Monday. Leave from Gatwick and you pay £355 for a fortnight's room-only accommodation near Disney World; from Manchester a week costs £315. Details: 0181-440 9010.

A WEEK'S B&B at a beach hotel in The Gambia — all of Africa's finer and calmer countries — is being offered for £269 a person from The Gambia Experience with flights from Gatwick on October 21 and 28. Details: 01703 730888.

TORONTO can almost match Orlando for shopping malls, so Bales Tours is offering four nights at the Delta Chelsea Inn Hotel, and the chance to browse in Yorkville and at the glass palace from

£399 a person. Fly from Heathrow on November 4 or 11. The price includes B&B and a city tour. Details: 01306 884397.

YOU CAN LOSE even more money gambling in Las Vegas now that Unijet has cut the cost of a week's fly-drive holiday to the casino capital to £289, provided you fly from Manchester on November 17. Car insurance extra. Details: 0990 336336.

SRI LANKA for a fortnight from 1966, including half-board, is among the Christmas-in-the-sun offers still available from Kuoni. Fly from Heathrow on December 16. Details: 01306 740500.

All prices are per person and based on two sharing a room, unless otherwise stated.

WEEKEND TRAVEL

See The Times on Saturday for more flight bargains and last-minute holidays

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Rare fare from plucky Canadians

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a woman standing against a dark background. She is wearing a dark, textured dress that appears to have a shimmering or sequined surface. Her arms are outstretched to the sides, and she is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of her dress and her figure against the deep black background.

creations. The horizon of hope and ambition; the triumphalist declaration; the feverish joy: all are there in Beethoven's score and van Schayk does his best to oblige. The ensemble of 20 dancers lamed it up.

CONCERTS: A former Beatle turns symphonic; and little-known Russians make their mark

Shades of mournful monotone

former USSR: alas, though some of this century's greatest composers worked within and against the system, the stagnation on the fringes of musical life was all too obviously reflected here.

Alexander Raskatov's *Misereire* in *memoriam* Oleg Kagan was composed in 1992, and it is not hard to see why it had to wait five years for this premiere. Scored for solo viola, solo cello, strings and less prominent winds and percussion, the work lasts a whole hour—did the composer really expect to be paid by the minute? Raskatov is a craftsman who knows how to achieve some striking effects, but despite Brabbin's firm conducting and excellent soloists in Paul Silverthorne and Anssi Karttunen, this dreary work remained stuck in one mournful rut.

Another composer who thinks that audiences have time on their hands is the Georgian Giya Kancheli. His *Abi ne videmur* for chamber orchestra, which received its UK premiere, inhabits a neo-Romantic sound-world and consists mainly of rhetorical gestures and tense silences. At least Elena Firsova possesses a more distinctive musical language, and her Chamber Concerto No 6 for piano and small orchestra, a "Reflections" commission premiered here, employs a bigger palette of colours. But no great demands are made on the soloist (Olga Balakietis), and the ethereal work only added to the unrelieved monotony of the concert.

Standing Stone

Albert Hall

WHEN this newspaper's critic William Mann once famously compared the Beatles to Schubert he was, of course, referring to their respective *outputs* of songs. Each produced some of the most enduring tunes of their time and set them to poignant texts. But while Paul McCartney's talents as a songsmith guarantee him a unique place in pop history, his efforts as a symphonist are likely to be quickly forgotten if Tuesday night's premiere of *Standing Stone* is anything to go by.

As anyone who actually remembers his *Liverpool Oratorio* will know, "crossover" music is not one of McCartney's strengths. It lacks the vigour and freshness of his pop music and falls far short of anything that could be described as "classical".

Standing Stone is neither fish nor fowl, but rather the musical equivalent of a vesper bursar. To judge by the

JOHN ALLISON
● This review appeared in late editions
yesterday

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Blood, toil, tears and metaphor

It is 1982. A battle has taken place on a faraway island. Men have been sliced in half. A group of British survivors gathers in a farmhouse. And what does their sergeant say about the prisoner they have taken? "Even this man is infinitely more valuable to me than nothingness. Even this man, lying there asleep, has the depth and life of a forest."

Well, I did not fight in the Falklands, the place and the conflict which Meredith Oakes's new play coyly fails to name. So I cannot definitively accuse her *Faith* of being unauthentic. But it left me with the feeling that some of her notions about military life were a little fanciful. Certainly, I have never met anyone quite like Howard Ward, her

Faith Ambassadors

Sergeant Spiers, who ends up accusing Mrs Thatcher and the nob class of turning the private soldiers (Jimmy Gallagher and Callum Dixon) into creatures of the dark — "and we want to live in the light with everyone else".

Dramatists have to be awfully good to get audiences to buy stuff as highfalutin as that, especially when they have spent much of the evening establishing their naturalistic credentials. Oakes is probably right to suggest that a soldier might crave Mars bars after a battle, or a shattered prisoner might not be able to stop yawning. It is when she stops observing and starts being significant about Soldiers and War that her play loses the modest grip on reality it has achieved.

Actually, I found it hard to believe in the central dilemma. Would our top brass really decide that the mere capture of an American mercenary might inflame the US public against us, and so order our soldiers to murder him? Hardly. But it is this that brings the conflict between Spiers and Karl Draper's Lance-Corporal Ziller to the boil.

Ziller is a tough, amoral fellow who accepts that a soldier's duty is to obey orders and, if necessary, to kill. Spiers is supposed to be more complex. He is a career NCO who joined the army for the security and funded the previous night's big battle. But this Pooterish coward is also the



Privates Pike (Jimmy Gallagher) and Finch (Callum Dixon) come under fire from heavy existential angst in Meredith Oakes's unbelievable tale of soldiers and soldiering. *Faith*

voice of patriotism and moral orthodoxy, and spends much of the play trying and failing to maintain his belief that good old Blighty stands for justice and decency.

Oakes's scepticism about Britain and the Falklands conflict is painfully obvious. But what do a dramatist's feelings matter if the plot is not plausible nor the dialogue consistently robust? "What's this golden banner above my head, this pride?" cries the despairing Spiers of the Union Jack. "It's just an old thin piece of cloth." I felt rather the same about the play.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

George Costigan's vision of *Macbeth* for the 1990s leans as heavily on its repertoire of lurid melodramatic tricks as it does on the newly elevated film star, Pete Postlethwaite. The Bristol Old Vic curtain lifts on a forest of heads impaled on spikes, and the witches — here a deeply weird choice of a drummer boy, a nurse and a lady in a wheelchair — emerge from rows of body bags.

There is little to romance about Postlethwaite's stumpy soldier with his big shrivelled head, sunken eyes and swollen cheekbones. His *Macbeth* may be mired in mucky politics, and his court may be a

Occult horror show

bizarre mixture of business-suited assassins and kilted samurai warriors. Yet the breathless pace of his ambition to get crowned in less than an hour is a masterclass in clarity of purpose. Events unfold in a swirl of topicality. There are press conferences to announce *Macbeth*'s promotion to Thane of Cawdor. A drunken Porter cracks jokes about "cash for questions". And there is a Kate Adie news report on Barmen wood.

There is something filmic about it too. Richard How-



ard's king Duncan looks like Terence Stamp, and the murder of Macduff's wife and offspring is so ingeniously slick and cruel it could have been choreographed by Tarantino. However, the inflammable point of Costigan's production is his equation of occultism with tribalism. In the programme notes, stories about Ouija boards, tarot

cards and crop circles are printed alongside newspaper cuttings about ethnic cleansing. This sounds dangerously and irresponsibly simplistic. It is. Yet the two themes are made to work in unison — and highly entertaining — tandem, which is why the murder of Nick Brimble's Banquo makes such horrific sense.

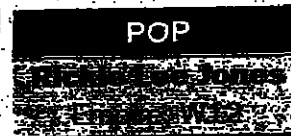
But what lifts Costigan's production out of the ordinary is quite simply Postlethwaite's performance. To marry he will always look like an ex-con with a face full of spammers.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

So far out she's in

ON THIS rare London date (only the fourth time she has played here in 14 years), Rickie Lee Jones wove a rich and varied tapestry of electronic beats, jazz, scat-poetry and intelligent pop.

Her new album, *Ghosthead*, provided the lion's share of the material, and there was no space for any of the earlier songs that once earned her comparison with Joni Mitchell. Indeed, her audience was so absorbed by



this sophisticated new fare that there was not a single call for her 1979 Top 20 hit, *Chuck E's in Love*. Jones has always spurred the commercial route and wherever her explorations have led, a mature fan base has been prepared to give her space to grow.

Standing for most of the time in an eerie red light, she gave an intense, brooding performance, swaying gently but otherwise undemonstrative. An electronic sequencer created evocative soundscapes and the guitar of Rick Boston, who collaborated with Jones on the album, added a harder-edged Velvet Underground-influenced density where required. The upright bass of Michael Alessandro, frequently bowed, offered further depth and jazzy textures.

Occasionally they sounded a little too self-consciously New York art school, but mostly they created the perfect haunting backdrop for the sinuous and supple instrument that is Jones's voice. While it is clear that she has been listening to Beth Gibbons of Portishead, the feral vocals on songs such as *Cloud of Unknowing* and *Little Yellow Town* also suggested the influence of Björk.

Jones's lyrics have grown more Zen-like over the years. Lines such as "now in soft detective voices the past rises and follows you in shapes of rain and dew" risk sounding pretentious on the page, but made perfect sense on stage performed in her half-sung, half-recited style.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

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miniatures was apparently suggested "by the child who forgets himself while he plays: the child for whom the instrument is still a toy". Here are tiny, tight *Knots* for the unravelling, a *Play with Overtones* in which chords beat against their own echo, a sweet *Bluebell* and an irascible *Thistle* — and a set of *Hommages* to Scarlatti, mischievously, to Stravinsky, in a peal of bells, and to a Hungarian folk violinist in the echo of a cimbalom.

Márta and György Kurtág's two and four-hand performances of these rare and wonderful crystallisations out of ancient musical bedrock are irresistibly interspersed with the intense and quiet beauty of



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ELISIR was one of Roberto Alagna's first recordings, a lightweight and still very engaging set on Erato. The decision to return to Nemorino must have been influenced by the chance to partner Angela Gheorghiu. He has changed his interpretation considerably. Alagna's tenor is now much robust and he opts for the second and rarely heard version of *Una furtiva lagrima*, which Donizetti wrote for a voice with some baritone timbre. Nemorino becomes not so much a lovesick boy as a simple blunderer.

Gheorghiu's Adina remains unsurpassed among her contemporaries as she pips out the notes when in capricious coloratura mood, or colours them with genuine affection as she shells out a few scudi to buy back Nemorino's army papers. She is a highly responsive singer, reacting with wit and poise to her two admirers in the Act I duets and to Simone Alaimo's outstanding Dulcamara in Act II. Roberto Scaltrini's Belcore could offer more swagger.

Evelino Pido keeps the Lyons Orchestra on its toes and Frank Dunlop's knockabout 1920s production from the French house is available on video. The Donizettian spirit, though, is best preserved on CD.

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"LOOK at virtually any picture of Brahms and you see a fat man," says Gidon Kremer, going on to suggest that the image has tended to produce "fat" interpretations of the composer's music over the years. Kremer's response is to scale down the virtuoso solo part of the Violin Concerto and make the work more like a conversation between equals.

It is an approach that suits his particular style, because Kremer, although an undoubted virtuoso, has a thin, somewhat undernourished tone in any case. And here it is convincing — especially in the first two movements — aided and abetted as Kremer is by the great revisionist himself, Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

Together they bring out the chamber music qualities of the score, an aspect that is even more relevant to the Double Concerto, where Kremer and cellist Clemens Hagen engage in fruitful dialogue right from the opening exchanges. Fascinating new perspectives on a pair of over-familiar works.

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TEN OBJECTS OF DESIRE

Richard Cork's daily guide to the Hayward Gallery's new exhibition of still lifes

■ FRIDA KAHLO: *Still Life with Prickly Pears*, 1938
OVERSHADOWED while she was alive by her mural-painting husband Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo has won a formidable posthumous reputation. Whatever she painted, Kahlo always charged her subject with an autobiographical significance. Even this simple plate of prickly pears seems to bear on her own life, for one of the pears is damaged, and its crimson flesh has left smears resembling blood on china and drapery alike. They remind us that a serious accident doomed Kahlo to constant pain. Her art speaks of suffering, even when she concentrates on the enticements of fruit.

□ *Objects of Desire* is at the Hayward (071-960 4242), sponsored by BMW in association with The Times.

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CHANGING TIMES

Exile and isolation of rebels with causes

If, as is alleged, some people in London think that *Les Misérables* is a musical about a gloomy chap called Leslie, it would not be the first time that Victor Hugo has been misunderstood. Royalists hailed him as a republican; republicans revered him as a royalist. He did not give them much help in getting it right. Like our present Prime Minister, he was mostly above such details.

His father was one of Napoleon's generals, and as a small boy he was taken to Spain, where General Hugo had ordered traitors' heads to be nailed round the church porches. But as a schoolboy he turned against both his father and the defeated Napoleon. His poetic genius, and his genius for success, soon declared themselves. In 1817, at the age of 15, he won a prize from the Académie Française for a poem on reading, and by the age of 18 he was bringing tears to the eyes of Louis XVIII (and getting a reward of 500 francs) for his ode on the death of the murdered Duc de Berry. Before the monarchy was finished he was a peer of the realm.

For 65 years, his fame just grew and grew. He turned aside from

politics in his twenties and created French Romanticism, overturning all the classical restraints on form and vocabulary, and, bringing into being a world, as he said, "in which all words were equal". This period culminated in the performance of his play about a Spanish bandit, *Hernani*, at the Comédie Française in 1830. The battle between the disapproving old and the enthusiastic young spectators turned the theatre, as Graham Robb says, "into a boxing ring and public urinal". But the play played on.

Graham Robb tells the tremendous story of Hugo's life quite brilliantly. He does not like Hugo very much, but he is perpetually amazed by him, and is often very witty. He watches Hugo "constructing his ego" from childhood on, and says that he ended up with a whole "limited liability company of egos". He watches the extended metaphors moving over Hugo's epic works "like weather systems".

In politics, especially, Hugo needed all his different egos. Though he had become a republican, by 1848 he was fighting the rebels on the barricades, declaring he loved the people but hated anarchy. But in 1851, when Louis-Napoléon triumphed bloodily on



Hugo: political waverings

the next barricades, Hugo withdrew to the Channel Islands for 18 years. He went grandly into exile "with the conviction that he was filling a vacancy", says Robb. For the whole of the Second Empire he fired devastating blasts across at Louis-Napoléon (now Napoleon III) in prose and verse. He thought the death threats he received "were as satisfying as a good review"; meanwhile, he got on with reams of poetry and vast panoramic

VICTOR HUGO
By Graham Robb
Picador, £20
ISBN 0 330 33707 6

ALBERT CAMUS
By Olivier Todd
Translated by Benjamin Ivry
Chatto & Windus, £20
ISBN 0 7011 0062 4

Derwent May
on two giants
of French
literature



Camus: knew where he stood

novels. Yet it was still hard to know what his politics really were. Nor did his readers know where he stood on love and sex. A young virgin, he married Adèle, a neighbour's daughter, but soon gave up "innocence for indulgence", kept an actress-mistress for 50 years, and pursued laundresses and prostitutes almost till his dying day, keeping coded notes on them all in his diary. (His wife became the mistress of his one-time friend,

the critic Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve.)

He wrote lyrics in praise both of the family and of uninhibited love. Everything was contradiction. "He could talk for hours about concision", Robb observes — yet he gives us "inspiring lessons in the art of surviving one's own personality".

He returned to Paris in triumph in 1870, calling simultaneously for barbarous attacks on the Germans

and for a United States of Europe. In 1871, he managed to keep the love both of the bourgeoisie and the Communards. When he died in 1885, he was given a 21-gun salute, was trundled at his own request through Paris in a shabby old truck before a crowd of two million and buried in the Pantheon. In Robb's last words in his long book, he was "the most lucid case of madness in literature".

Olivier Todd's life of Albert Camus could not be a greater contrast. Where Robb bounces about, joking and stage-managing his story, Todd entirely conceals himself behind a bare narrative of facts. This is disastrous in the early chapters: the wonderful account that Camus gave of his Algerian childhood in his posthumous novel *The First Man* is reduced to a tedious précis.

However, Todd has had access to all Camus' letters and diaries, and this plain tale slowly begins to grip. It confirms, to my mind, what a good and attractive man Camus was — as well as being the best French writer in the Sarre circle, who began as his friends and ended as his enemies.

Politically, Camus was always

torn between his principled attachment to the Left and his distrust, which eventually became hatred, of the Communists and fellow-travellers who had virtually taken over the Left in France during the war. He was even more isolated once the Algerian War began. He wanted the Arabs to have their own state, but his heart was with his mother and the other poor French of Algeria, and he was as bitterly opposed to Arab terrorism as he was to French repression. All he could effectively do to show his feelings was to plead for clemency for Arabs sentenced to death — pure wimpishness in the eyes of the pro-Arab Communists.

The French may not have known where he stood, but unlike Hugo he always did, and his political books leave a legacy of thought. His novels, especially *La Peste*, take him into a different and greater realm. He had one thing in common with Hugo — his love for, and success with, women. When he died in a car crash in January 1960, he left behind him a wife and family, and three mistresses who were steady and loyal though they all knew about each other, including the great Spanish actress of the French cinema Maria Casares.

More and less than Zero

NO PERSON of the theatre could read this book without a mounting sense of recognition, sympathy, and horror. It is the reverse of the coin so classically presented in Moss Hart's *Act One* many decades ago: it is not the story of a success after long labour but of a disaster after equally long labour.

It is also a hurt book, a sincere and puzzled look, about the relationship between a famous director, John Dexter, and a famous playwright, Arnold Wesker, who shared success together in their early days and then came back to each other, as it were, for the mounting of a fateful play that was called *Shylock* and lived to regret it, and be wounded by it, to the darkest degree.

Not only did the star, Zero Mostel, die after the first out-of-town preview, but there was really no bad involved that did not quickly go to worse. The gods were against it.

It begins with all the easy sense of a partnership revived and ends with all the gearlocked misery of a partnership destroyed. In fact, the closing lap of the book, where after three months of preparation

Sebastian Barry

THE BIRTH OF SHYLOCK AND THE DEATH OF ZERO MOSTEL
By Arnold Wesker
Quercus, £12
ISBN 0 7043 8063 3

the production is heading towards opening night in New York, is so fraught and dicey and painful, there is such a Gothic reversal of fortunes for the playwright — in the presence of his wife and children — that you're reading through your fingers, praying for a triumphant outcome in spite of everything.

All power to Arnold Wesker for writing this princely book, full of the drawbacks of being human and the disdain of the divine powers when they are inclined to crush a mortal venture underfoot. If it's any consolation, even 20 years after the trauma, he has made out of his diaries and papers of the time a copiously successful account of a dizzying failure, a classic book of the theatre that will be a wonder — and a warning — to all.

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Imogen Stubbs on the sounds and silences of Doris Lessing



Doris Lessing: the second volume of her memoirs is a cooler, more outward-looking recollection of life than the first volume, *Under My Skin*

Matters of the heart after matters of principle

I always kept diaries until "by an accident" someone threw them all away. Since then I am so disconnected with my past self that whenever I try to remember anything, I feel like the character in every PoW film who huddles in a corner with a makeshift transmitter ducted to his mouth, whispering "Hello London... hello London..." but never gets through the crackle.

Not so with Doris Lessing who confirms, with this second volume of her autobiography, what we already know: that she is a disarmingly honest, funny writer with a fearless sense of vocation that has been a blessing for us and a mixed blessing for herself.

Whenever I read an autobiography I wonder about the "need" behind the writing. Whether the writer is trying to intimate his or her way into our hearts, or whether there is a simple desire to add hard-earned perceptions to the mass of "human" experience, or whether there is something closer to T. S. Eliot's "how can I know what I think until I see what I say?"

Autobiography can be a form of self-restoration for the writer's own benefit and peace of mind and as defence against future biographers. In *Under My Skin* Lessing chronicles her childhood in the white heat of the Rhodesian sun and Rhodesian politics by going deep in the heart of herself: in

Walking in the Shade she seems to be cooler, more outward — as if recollecting this period of her life "from the shaded side of the street". The whole process of writing is a setting at a distance. That is the value of it — to the writer and to the people who read the results of this process, which takes the raw, the individual, the unrefined, the unexamined, into the realm of the general.

The book deals with many things — from Kea Tynan's whip collection to the BBC mispronouncing names and places "as a matter of principle" — but overwhelmingly it attempts to understand and make understood how communism dominated the intellectual life of the 1950s: "The (now) incredible and unforgivable fact that some of the most socially concerned, hopeful for the future, dedicated souls conspired at the crimes of the Communist World by refusing to recognise them, and then, by refusing to acknowledge them."

My mother was an idealistic young woman in London during these times and often spoke of them — but this is the first time I have not wanted to come back with incredulity and derision. Lessing suggests disquieting explanations that are not flattering, but they are persuasive. Sophocles wrote that love is a piece of ice clenched tight in the fist of a child. I think the love of

communism is not unrelated to this.

The book begins with Lessing arriving in London in 1949, a convinced radical and single mother, with one son, Eliso, and the typescript of her first novel, *The Grass is Singing*. It ends in the Sixties with her exploring various spiritual paths, becoming house-mother in many troubled youths, with a general shift towards prosperity. *The Golden Notebook* completed and everyone singing.

In the years between, the politics and the immediate success of her first novel ensure her inclusion in the

WALKING IN THE SHADE
By Doris Lessing
HarperCollins, £20
ISBN 0 00 255861 0

fashionable world of left wing politics (she is even an honorary angry young man), or as one lady referred to them "those furry little people". This, of course, does nothing to alleviate either her finances or the problems of being a single mother. But it does mean her involvement with many now legendary campaigns — including the Aldermaston marches, and the campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament — and many now legendary people — Tony Richardson, Paul Rob-

son, Bertrand Russell, Henry Kissinger, Joan Littlewood.

And then there are those who become legendary in the telling, like Betty, the bishop's daughter with a penchant for anti-British militants in the Congo; and Miss Bell, the cleaning lady, who could never containance sex, because in her youth some poor boy had ejaculated on her non-wipeable leather shoes.

Lessing's observations of the frailties and strengths of the many individuals she encounters reveal not only the gift for detailed characterisation which distinguishes her as a novelist and playwright, but also the gift for "intimacy" which engendered so many relationships in the first place.

The volume is divided into four sections named after her respective addresses during this period, and her homes form the narrative centre from which all else emanates in a sense the reader is invited to lodge with her. The book is not particularly well-shaped — because life isn't — and much of her commentary takes on the discursive form of bulletins or prefaced fragments — "a scene", "a moment", "the Zeitgeist". For anyone requiring more shape or "thickness" through to these moments, she is one of the few writers who can put "see novel" where others might put "see note". But even her fragments are compelling, and often completely unexpected.

In *Under My Skin* Lessing describes leaving two small children, and earned criticism for not examining what she felt about it: "It seemed to me obvious that I was bound to be unhappy, and any intelligent reader would understand that without ritual beatings of the breast."

Nevertheless I think their absence haunts *Walking in the Shade*. She includes very rare or non-committal references to them, and then abruptly changes the subject. "But all this is outward." She lays herself open to accusations of hypocrisy at moments which would otherwise have provoked sympathy — as with her references to Gottfried Lessing's heartless absentee parenting, or the failure of her mother, or her abandonment by various lovers. I think, ironically, that by giving more of herself away, at times she would have better preserved herself.

At the end of *Walking in the Shade*, Lessing is still only in her forties, with at least half of her amazingly full life to tell. How much of her is glimpsed and known? There is a fragment of Pablo Neruda that seems to me to capture her: "Bees, shadows, fire, snow, silence and foam, covering with steel and wire and pollen..."

I am greatly looking forward to what more will come.

Genius who made science into gold

Peter Ackroyd

ISAAC NEWTON
The Last Sorcerer
By Michael White
Fourth Estate, £18.99
ISBN 1 85702 416 8

The apple did not fall. Isaac Newton invented that happy story in order to conceal the fact that his theory of gravitation was the direct result of alchemical experiment: he was the "last sorcerer" who believed that the secret knowledge of the ancients could be recovered by reading occult texts and, according to his latest biographer, by practising the blacker arts of magic.

He came from a family of Lincolnshire yeomen, born without a father (who had died a few weeks before) on Christmas Day. Newton himself often emphasised the miraculous aspect of his origin: if in later life he was treated by his contemporaries as a "demi-god", in the words of Michael White, he was receiving the only appropriate compliment.

His family seems to have been practically illiterate, but the young Newton was enrolled at the King's School in Grantham. He lived above an apothecary's shop, devoured religious pamphlets, and constructed elaborate models of windmills and sundials; it is perhaps suggestive that he never studied mathematics before he arrived at Cambridge, but White suggests that at this juncture he discovered "the principles of hard work and dedication to learning". He was also something of a prig, with insatiable tendencies to first distinguished himself at university by becoming a part-time moneylender.

But his self-imposed isolation encouraged the kind of

psy, despite Michael White's propensity for journalism and his occasional obsequiousness to the wonderful modern mind — as if somehow we know more than those who came before us. We do not know more; we simply know different things. What is more striking, however, is the portrait of Newton which emerges in the course of this narrative. He was secretive and hypochondriacal; he was afflicted by paranoia and what White calls "almost demented self-motivation"; he was obsessed by the colour of crimson and believed that the Universe was, in a real sense, the body of Jesus Christ.

He was, in other words, possessed by a powerful genius. He worked in silence and isolation, broken only by ferocious arguments with scientific colleagues. Then came the great triumph. In an intriguing passage, White recounts the nights when Newton watched with wonder as a comet traversed the heavens; as he observed this bright star he meditated upon the still occult notion of secret attraction or repulsion at a distance. Alchemy blended with the night sky to produce the great theory of gravitation.

Gravity became his "Universal Spirit", and he expounded its majesty in *Principia Mathematica*. He worked up on the project continually, scarcely bothering to eat or sleep. It is perhaps not surprising that he suffered a temporary spell of madness, before re-entering the world.

White describes Newton as one of the twin pillars of the "Age of Reason", together with his friend Locke, and it was perhaps inevitable that he felt drawn to a setting larger than that of his laboratory. The moneylender became a money-maker. He was appointed Warden of the Royal Mint and, in that capacity, brought to the manufacture of coin, all the precision and thoroughness of his experimental work. The success triumphed again, he creating the "scientific economy" which still exists. In turn he became the prosecutor of anyone who defied his inexorable laws, dispatching to the gallows all those who clipped or counterfeited the currency. He became, as it were, the master of ceremonies for the first capitalist state. Knowledge truly was power.

At the end of his life he declared that he would like to have "another touch at metals", but his work was done. It was perhaps in that spirit he refused to be given the last rites: he remained self-sufficient to the grave. He said that all his life he had been "only like a boy, playing on the sea shore" while beyond him, undiscovered, lay "the great ocean of truth". But Newton was being unusually modest; he had, after all, recreated that truth in his own image.



Peter Stothard on Hadrian, the trendsetting autocrat who dumped his wife in Bath

Emperor beyond the wall

When the far-flung subjects of the Roman empire first saw the coins of the emperor Hadrian, they experienced a shock: their new ruler had a beard. For hundreds of years, the civilised Roman male had prided himself on a shaven face. Now their saviour and protector had a well-trimmed set of hair around his chin and looked like a Greek. What was the world coming to in AD 117?

Within a few years the answer was clear. Most of the adult males who acknowledged Roman power became bearded and remained so for a century. Hadrian was a trendsetter. He held views on fashion, literature, philosophy, economics and military affairs that powerfully influenced an age which Gibbon was to describe as the most happy and prosperous for the human race. He exerted his influence by means of the longest foreign journeys that any emperor had ever undertaken, showing an intellectual and physical restlessness that gives Anthony Birley the title for his book.

The motives of Hadrian's wanderlust are complex and have fascinated historians from the 4th century to the 20th. But Birley's is the first substantial biography in English since 1923 and, while stronger on the chronology of travels than the criticism of art or ideas, it gives an up-to-date portrait of a recognisably modern monarch.

Like most of his contemporaries, Hadrian was keen to escape the chains of a childhood spent in Rome under the vicious rule of Domitian. Birley cites a passage from the historian Cassius Dio in which senators were entertained to a dinner of black food, served by black boys, in a black room on a gravestone slab while the emperor intoned for hours about killings and death.

Years of political purging much reduced the survivors' appetites for symbols of their imperial past. Out went shaven faces; out too went the works of Virgil, Horace and Lucan. In came the archaic writers of the Roman republican era, Ennius and Cato, whose language was less associated with the secret police. Like the young fogies of our own time, Hadrian's contemporaries would vie with each



Lord of 30 legions, but in thrall to one young man: Hadrian — in his fashionable beard — is pictured with his beloved Bythynian, Antonina

other in their peculiar brand of virtue. Even the old-fashioned historian Sallust was not old-fashioned enough. Latin itself seemed somehow tainted; better to study Greek. The provinces were smarter and more confident than Rome. And if all the new learning might seem too difficult, this was also the era of the anthology and the good-dinner-party guides — for those who wanted to make modern conversation the better of reading too many old books.

Hadrian's chief military strategy was to reject the ideas of his immediate predecessor, Trajan: to avoid starting wars, to shrink the empire's boundaries and establish clear defensible lines to mark off the Roman people from the rest. His economic policy was to cut taxes, liberate provinces and individuals from debt, and, as

Dio puts it in anticipation of a later reformer from the land south of Hadrian's Wall: "to have a grasp of the national exchequer as total as the careful housewife has of her kitchen". For all the success of these policies, it was sensual and intellectual pleasure that seem to have come first.

He was an enthusiastic homosexual. He took his wife with him on his travels only to ensure that she was not plotting to supplant him at home: "offspring of his would harm the human race", she once said, justifying her failure to become pregnant. On a trip to the great wall in Britain, by which his name is now best known, he dumped her at Bath; there she is said to have lived with the sexual attentions of the historian Suetonius. On a trip to Egypt she may have shown her own

HADRIAN
The Restless Emperor
By Anthony Birley
Routledge, £40
ISBN 0 415 16544 X

flexibility in a lesbian affair with the poet Julia Balbilla.

The great love of Hadrian's own life was for the Bythynian boy Antoninus whose death by drowning in the river Nile in AD 130 remains one of the most alluring mysteries in imperial history. Was it the suicide of a young man who no longer had boyish appeal for his master? Had the Egyptian gods demanded Hadrian's death and had Antoninus offered himself in the emperor's place? Did Hadrian have Antoninus murdered to save himself from the prophecies of his doom? Whatever the cause,

Hadrian named a new city after the boy, promulgated his memory in coins and elevated him to the gods. Love? Guilt? Remorse? Birley gives a judicious account of the options before leaving the final answers to Marguerite Yourcenar and the modern romancers.

Life with Hadrian was clearly not easy. He could be charming and rarely forgot a name or face. He allowed the poet Florus to write witty verses satirising his British travels — and even responded with a critique of the poet's pub-crawling. But like many artistic statesmen he allowed only a degree of licence to the thinkers around him. His pet Gallic philosopher Favorinus was once criticised for giving way too easily to the emperor's grammatical views: "you must allow me to consider him more learned," Favorinus replied,

"for he is the lord of 30 legions".

Hadrian's original claim to the throne was far from perfect. He had to deal briskly with early rivals, executing four ex-consuls and only showing atonement in the security of his reign's end. By the time of his own death, however, he had left behind a 19-word poem addressed to his soul that is both fashionably archaic in tone and arguably superior to any literary work in history by a man of such power. John Donne, Lord Byron, Henry Vaughan and Sievie Smith have all left versions of "animula, vagula, blandula, hospes comesque corporis" and it remains a piece as characteristic as anything that this polymath emperor contributed to his own time and to ours — more so than any wall.

Criticism is not a novel experience



Brookner: sharply authoritative

DIDEROT, Anita Brookner informs us *en passant*, considered that the critic's job was dull and flat. He spoke as a novelist who found that the day job obstructed the pursuit of the Muse. For Anita Brookner there seems to be no such conflict. The novels come out year by year, like roses, and the art history and literary criticism can be spotted in newspapers like solitary swallows, now gathered up here into a lively flock.

Concentrating on the 19th century, Brookner writes authoritatively about painters such as Gericault, Ingres and Delacroix, and all kinds of writers, from Rousseau to the weird guy who invented the Scarsdale diet. Gathering up one's journalism is sometimes criticised as pedantic; in Brookner's case the result is a treat. Each review sounds more like an original essay.

Michèle Roberts

SOUNDINGS
By Anita Brookner
Harvill, £16
ISBN 1 85460 388 6

We eavesdrop on Brookner's impassioned conversations with some of the great icons, and equally great failures, of the Romantic era. So we meet poor Louise Colet, thinking that the way to Flaubert's heart was to turn up unannounced and ask to meet his mother, and the astonishing Madame de Staël, who wanted to be crowned as a goddess, and Théophile Gautier's daughter Judith who believed that she was spiritually Japanese and wrote a guide to Tokyo without ever leaving Paris. Those of

course, were the heydays of Orientalism, and these fantasies have not worn well. Nonetheless, these hapless eccentrics spring to sharp and glum life in Brookner's pages.

Part of the pleasure of this book comes from discerning the romantic novelist hiding behind the critic of Romanticism. Beginning her review of a book about Rosa Bonheur, Brookner tells us that "abroad, in provincial cities, indolent and homesick, one turns, as ever, to the museum. When one is in this mood, great masterpieces no longer serve their purpose: they are too important, too strenuous, they belong to a world outside one's own. From long experience one learns to follow the arrow which says *Ecole française XIXe siècle*, and there on the attic floor... are those faithful and sturdy mediocrities whose confidence,

unattenuated by years of public neglect, will somehow shoulder one through until tea-time." It's a shock to discover that we're not inside the pages of *A Start in Life* or *Hôtel du Lac*. Perhaps this is the intellectual underpinning of her fiction, the steel hoop under the crinoline. She writes feelingly of these forgotten painters: "They match one's nostalgia for simple rules, simple illustrations, simple nourishment." Her novels mourn that too.

Brookner as a moralist can be brisk and fastidious. I admire her encyclopaedic sentences, whose pronouncements seem papal in their confident summing-up. She's like Penelope, fobbing off her suitors, offering a tight weave of words, inviting you to jab with your crochet hook and re-ravel her: and then she's off again.

Recollections of a shining spirit

Julia Neuberger

WHERE LIGHT AND SHADOW MEET
By Emilie Schindler with Erika Rosenberg
Translated by Dolores M. Roth
Noron, £16.95
ISBN 0 303 04123 9

IF YOU were moved by Spielberg's *Schindler's List* or Ken Kesey's novel before it, then this memoir by Frau Schindler is a must. Though not well written, it is extraordinarily emotional, telling the story of Emilie Schindler, why she did what she did, and how she fared.

She was born in a small town called Alt-Molestein, in Moravia. She had a happy, unremarkable childhood and went on to an agricultural school. There she met a Jewish girl, Rita Gross, who became a close friend. Emilie Schindler records how Rita was brutally murdered by the army commander at Alt-Molestein. She ponders on how he was later executed by the "Russians": "perhaps to make us believe that eventually there is some divine justice, though it often does come too late."

Very young, she married the colourful Oskar Schindler. He was handsome, flashy, extravagant, and constitutionally unfaithful. At least one of his mistresses, Viktoria Klonowska, had excellent contacts with high authorities, and "improved Oskar's connections with the Gestapo". This is the sort of bald comment Emilie Schindler often makes. Her husband's behaviour ob-

viously shocked and distressed her — but it had, in retrospect, its uses. For at Plaschow, at the enamel factory Oskar ran, they had Jewish workers whom they sheltered. But Amos Goetz wanted to close the Plaschow camp and send its occupants to Auschwitz. Schindler began to confide in his wife. He had been offered a factory in Brünitz, but had to persuade Goetz and then the Brünitz quartermaster general that he could take his workers. Emilie handled that negotiation. The general was her old swimming teacher; she got her permit, and some Jews' lives were saved.

But the women were to be sent to Auschwitz. The Schindlers asked an old friend, Hilde, to help. With her contacts, she succeeded, but no-one knows how, or



Happy, for a time: Emilie and Oskar Schindler in 1942

what became of her. Emilie Schindler says: "I think this book provides a good opportunity to offer this extraordinary woman recognition for all she did."

The same could be said for Emilie Schindler. She nursed "her" Jews, and worked tirelessly with Oskar to save them. After the war they ended up in Argentina — where, ultimately, he abandoned her. She is bitter: for she was poor and alone. But now, at nearly 90, she has help, and good connections

with the Jewish community, with friends. She has also had recognition — a visit to the Pope, to the Chief Rabbi of Rome, to the President of Germany, and a German Order of Merit. But what is she left with? She does not regard herself as a heroine, but through her hundreds of people survived. Though ordinary, she behaved like a good human being in extreme circumstances, without fuss. That is heroic, in my terms. And there were all too few like her.

Taste for the food of love

Jonathan Sacks sweeps from coloratura to Cobain

SOME years ago I took part in a rather unusual Jewish-Christian dialogue between a class of rabbinical students and a group of African bishops. For three days we exchanged learned lectures on theology. There was an atmosphere of distant courtesy, as if strangers were trying to be polite to one another. In an attempt to break through to our common humanity, I suggested that for the last evening, instead of yet another exposition of doctrine, we taught each other our favourite songs. It worked. For hours we sang together. It was an object lesson in the power of music to create community.

For me music has always been something of a mystery, an enchanted world not unlike that of religious faith, pointing to something real yet inexpressible in any other language than its own. Like other enthusiastic philistines, I prefer to enjoy it without trying to spell out in words what it is I am enjoying. There is something self-sufficient about listening to a symphony or string quartet that threatens to make philosophical reflection rather like trying to explain the point of a joke. The experience is lost in the explanation.

Roger Scruton was the right person to wake us out of our conceptual slumbers. A formidably gifted philosopher, he here combines analytical rigour with a daunting knowledge of the repertoire as a performer and occasional composer, to ask the most fundamental questions about what music is and what our capacity to enjoy it tells us about the human condition.

Philosophers tend to ask questions that the rest of us find odd and normally take for granted. Much of *The Aesthetics of Music* is taken up by inquiries of this kind. What is a piece of music? A series of sounds that could adequately be described by a scientific description of changing vibrations in the air? Or is it something quite different, a communication that can only be created, understood and shared by rational beings capable of imagination? Is music a language, and if so what does it communicate? In a movement, what moves? How exactly does music occupy space and time?

If I understand Scruton correctly, music is sound heard in a special way, much as a word is only recognised by the speaker of a language. It is an essentially human phenomenon, created and responded to by ordered imagination.

A musical tone is part of a sequence governed by intentions, not causes. In this respect it is like a language, but not quite. Its component parts are too dependent on context to have separable meanings and rules of combination. Instead, like architecture, it is a series of traditions, within which we participate as members of a community, recognising styles and finding delight in variations.

There is something too which makes the aesthetic experience not a religious experience. Music seems to hover on the brink of the inexpressible, inviting us into

a world of its own, the "point of intersection of the timeless with time". Even the most rudimentary attempt to talk about it is laden with metaphor — a melody rises and falls, cascades or flutters, but there is no space within which these things happen. Listening to music, as when we perform a religious ritual, we engage in a search for meaning and strain to hear "the distant voices of the tribe". Music makes articulate the otherwise hidden form of our shared emotions.

This is rich and rewarding study, and I doubt whether anyone could have done it better. The density of the argument is relieved by Scruton's mastery of illustrative detail and his acerbic *obiter dicta* on everything from the lyrics of Kurt Cobain to the social setting of the gavotte. Above all, though, he has produced a work of philosophy at its most expansive, light-years removed from the logic-chopping of a generation ago. For Scruton, music provides us with a glimpse of the human subject released from the world of objects, joining the "dance of sympathy" which redeems us from our solitude.

"Words still go softly out towards the unsayable," wrote Rilke, "and music, always new, from palpating stones/Builds in useless space its godly home." Scruton, in this ambitious work, has given us a mastery insight into the architecture of tonality and why its "useless space" matters as a home of the human spirit.

THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

An evening with P.D. James

P.D. James, Britain's most popular crime novelist, will discuss her highly successful career, her life as a writer and her characters, including the famous Commander Adam Dalglish — the subject of a major TV series in *The Times/Dillons* forum on Thursday, October 23. Chaired by Peter Stothard, Editor of *The Times*, the forum also offers the opportunity for the audience to put questions to Baroness James. The forum marks the publication of her new book *A Certain Justice* (Faber and Faber, £15.99) and will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1. Tickets are £10 (concession £7.50) which includes £2 off the price of the book. Subject to demand this event will be interpreted by sign language.



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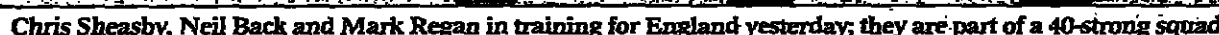
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European badminton coup for Scotland

By JOHN GOODBODY

One player he knows will be unavailable is Jeremy Guscott, the Bath centre, who described himself as "devastated" that he will miss all the pre-Christmas internationals.



the Heineken Cup, have arranged their play-off match with Pontypridd in this season's competition for November 1: Cardiff will play Llanelli on the same day and it is likely that Leicester's game with Glasgow will also go ahead on the Saturday.

BOWLS

Booth misses out on jackpot with his last-ditch gamble

By DAVID RHYS JONES

only to drop a full house on the second end, before taking the first set 7-4 with a treble on the third end. Yet another full house put Corsie in control in the second set, but Burckett, a tenacious South African, levelled the match with a 7-6 win.

Corsie, who has won the world indoor singles title three times, was the complete master in the final set, allowing Burckett a double on the third end, but scoring shots on six of the seven ends for a 7-4, 6-7, 7-2 victory.



No announcement on the availability to Great Britain of Jason Robinson and Gary Connolly for the opening international, at Wembley on November 1, is expected by the Australian Rugby League (ARL), to whom the Wigan pair are contracted, until after the world club championship final early tomorrow in Auckland.



Results, page 45

0171-782 7344

MOTOR RALLYING

Helping hand for McRae

1.45 HYDRAZINE JUVENILE NO
HURDLE (3-Y-0: £1,914; 2m 1f) (11

1 3F GRAY PASTER, 17 M Pipe 11-9
2 4PS1 SOUTHERN CHIEF 17 (B.O.F) of G M
3 42F1 LE GRAND GOUSIER 17 (B.O.F) R J
4 AFRICANO 12F R Hodges 10-11
5 GEORGE LAD 22F J Banesh 10-11
6 383 AQUAVITA 9 J S Moore 10-9

McRae trailed his Subaru colleague Liatti by four seconds after the 25 special stages, but the Italian then

[illegible]

David Richards, who owns Prodrive which commissions the Subaru team, said afterwards it had not been an easy

McRae and Liami had **durried** the lead continually during the day with no more than six seconds between them before the controversial finish. The start was typical. McRae erased one second from Liami's overnight lead in the first special stage of the day and went one second in front of the Italian on the third special. Liami was four seconds faster than McRae in the 21st stage, briefly reclaiming the lead.

TALKING

FAULTS

1.45 Aguavita. 2.20 Northern Dr
Baby. 3.30 Two Socks. 4.00 Prid
Euro Singer. 5.10 DOOR TO DO

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM

1.45 HYDRAZINE JUVENILE MURDER (3-Y-O; E 21-94; 2m 10) (11)
 1 CRF PASTOR, 17 M Page 11-8
 2 APTSI SOUTHERN CHF R (B.O.F.) # G N
 3 AF21 LE GRAND GOUSIER 11 (B.O.F.) R J
 4 CERNANDON 12 F Hodges 10-11
 5 GEORGE LAD 22 F Barnette 10-11
 6 3603 ARDWATTA S 15 Moore 10-9
 7 LUNA 10 F 10-11
 8 5243 SWEGHEN 11 M Magnaghi 10-6
 9 SUPERCHAMBER 20 (B) B Jacobs
 10 KAYZE 10 F Barnette 10-6
 11 GROEFARF DANCER S F Stanley 10

3-1 Le Grand Gousier 7-2 George Lad 9-2 Southern

2 20

[illegible]

(£3,818: 3m) (6)

3.30 RESORCINOL NOVICES H
(22.90g, 2m 11) (14)

1- 2-11 JAFANUS 24 (2.65) 30.9
2- 0-31 CLARIE'S DANCER 11 (7.7) 24
3- 65-3 DARK HORSE 10 (8) 25.5
4- 10-11 MACHIN SERENADE 07.7
5- 10-11 MASTER FIELD 17.6

6 6/ MISTER MAYBE 873 P Farrah 5-18-1
7 405 JUMP THE LIGHTS 60 P Redford 4-1
8 32- ROYAL ACTION 1746 OER O Sherman

8 TWO SOCIETY 27F-1 King 4-10-11
9
10 P60- HONEYMAN 156 R Mitchell 5-20-
11 250- LONICER 199 R Aber 7-10-7
12 WINSOME AYA 228BF 8-Lewisham 8
13 HENBURY-PRINCESS 3BF 8-Hodges
14 MINCEA 22F M Patten 4-10-6
5-2 Royal Acacia 3-1 Antares 8-1 Claire's Dancer.
10-1 Minerva 12-1 Antares 14-1 others

4.00 CAVENTOSH TECHNOLOGY HANDICAP

HURDLE (E3.063: 2m 3/110yd) (8)

1 310- ULTIMATE SMOOTHIE 17F (B,F,A,S) M Page 5-11-1
McGoy

2 5032 SPORT OF FOOLS 14 (G,S) S Cole 8-10-12 ... G

3 1727 CASUAL WATER 12F (B,F,G) A Newcombe 6-10-11

4 211 PRIDE OF KASHMER 21 (F,G) P Hobbs 4-10-11 ...

5 14-6 COURAGEOUS KNIGHT 36 (F) P Harward 8-10-7

6 508- ROSEHALL 224 (D.F.) Mrs T Pilkington 6-10-5 .. G
7 00-0 ROSE-B 38 (C.G.) L Waring 7-10-2 .. M
8 111- MORDVADANTE 197 (A.) M Murch 7-10-0 .. Sonbia

4.35 **SEFLD IOWA CHALLENGE CUP NOV**
CHASE (E2,927 2m 110yd) (5)

1-**83** **ALL CLEAR** 13 (O,S,F) R Alter 6-10-12
2-**89** **CAMPBELL'S LAD** 556 R Alter 6-10-12
3-**04** **GREEN GREEN** 523 3 (F,F,A,S) O Sherwood
4-**06** **DALENE**
5-**63** **WILLIAMS SUNS** 54 (F,F) G Edmonds 9-10-12 ... M
6-**27** **BLIND SINGER** 8 (O,A) J Edmonds 5-10-12
7-**03** **STANMORE** 19 C B Singer 5-10-11
8-4 **EDMONDS** 42, 9-4 **Edmonds** 3-2 **Stanmore**, 7-1 **All Clear**,
Ces, 26-1 **Camberland** Last.

510

3.10 HYDROXYLAMINE STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (£1,150: 2m 10)

1 **LATIN MISSRESS 27 (F) P Richards 5-11-8** L Ca
00 **A VIGOR 20 (F) L. Dwyer 5-11-8** L Ca
3 **ADAM 28 (F) P Richards 5-11-8** L Ca
4 **COAT TO DOOR C Brocks 5-11-8** L Ca
5 **MOBILE ACHTER 16 (F) Pritchard 5-11-4** G
6 **UNWARRANTED C Brocks 5-11-4** G
8 **DONE FROM ABOVE 19 (F) J Price 4-11-3**
9 **SILVER CROSS R Gasser 4-11-3**
10 **MITE EDUARD M Bickel 4-11-3**
11 **PUL-TYPE WOMAN 16 (F) P Richards 6-10-13** Mr R
12 **REDGRANGE WOLF 16 (F) Bishop 4-10-12** G
5-2 **Laticia Mares**, 4-1 **Mobile Achter**, 10-12 **Done To Door**, 11-2 **Coat To Door**, 12-4 **Unwarranted**, Typical Woman, 14-4 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: J. Nease, 4 winners from 13 runners, 30.8%; P. Hobbs, 1 from 59, 22.2%; M. Pipe, 43 from 207, 20.8%; G. Edwards, 6 from 17, 35.3%; K. Jones, 4 from 24, 16.7%; G. Stammers, 1 from 1, 100%.

Gold Cup rivals clash

his intention to return the Hennessy Cup Gold Cup winner to action in the 1991-92 season.

Orchid South West Pattern Chase, which was also the target for Mr Mulligan, the Cheltenham Gold Cup winner. But Denais is keen to rush his eight-year-old, who has not since finishing well beaten behind Mulligan at Cheltenham in March.

...the fact that the *in vitro* and *in vivo* results are in good agreement, and that the *in vivo* results are in good agreement with the results of the *in vitro* studies.

11

100

3/10/1971

GOLF

Teeing up for controversy at St Andrews

By JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT

EVERY two years there is a danger that golf's two main matchplay or strokeplay events of the autumn are overshadowed by a thrilling Ryder Cup. It happened in 1995 and it happened again this year. The World Match Play Championship which concluded at Wentworth last Sunday was a pale shadow of itself, with a less than stellar field playing in almost incessant rain. Alterations need to be made if this event is to retain its status.

Today, the other half of the autumn double begins, the Dunhill Cup at St Andrews. This team event will have to do a lot to make up for the disappointments of last week, and to convince golf enthusiasts that its odd formula of men playing one another as in matchplay, but the winner being the one who takes the fewer strokes over 18 holes, is anything other

given time over the glorious Old Course is assuaged by the sights of St Andrews in its full autumn colours — clear sunlit days of biting cold when a scarf and gloves are essential. Even that does not seem likely this year. Rain fell yesterday and when it ceased clouds remained low before a drizzle started up again in the late afternoon.

The clouds, however, were not so threatening as the repercussions from some intemperate remarks Colin Montgomerie made before the Ryder Cup. The Scot gave a brief analysis of members of the American team, to which, subsequently, some offence was taken, and which caused some minor American professionals to say that Montgomerie would not be welcomed on the US PGA Tour next year. Montgomerie claimed yesterday that his remarks had not come out as he had intended them. He said he had written to every American who was named, to Tony Kite, the US captain, and had spoken to Brad Faxon last week at Wentworth. "I hope this issue can now be considered at an end," he said.

Of greater interest will be what the players have to say about six new tees being used in competition for the first time which, together, add another 161 yards to the Old Course. The 3rd, 6th, 10th, 13th, 15th and 16th holes have the new tees, the 15th and 16th now being 46 and 44 yards longer, respectively.

A few voices have been raised in dissonance already. The first was Severiano Ballesteros who suggested that the Old Course was a masterpiece and to alter it would be to defile it. This is the view held by Frank Nobilo, the New Zealander, who said: "You cannot alter a monument and that is what the Old Course is."

Mark O'Meara said much the same thing. "This place is kind of the birthplace of golf. I think they should leave it alone."

The alterations were made to keep up with developments in technology and, update hazards that have become out of date, said Michael Bonallack, the secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club.



David Needham saw victory snatched from his team, Needham Enterprises, at St Pierre yesterday

Devonport make late charge

By MEL WEBB

VICTORY seemed out of the question. It was all over bar the shouting, surely. The team that had led for two hours were preparing to celebrate, but their joy was nipped in the bud by four men who sailed into the clubhouse at St Pierre, Cheltenham, yesterday and holed the opposition below the waterline at the last possible moment.

The winning team in the Wales and South West regional final of The Times MeesPierson Corporate Golf Challenge work for Devonport Management Limited, whose prime business is refitting fighting ships for the Royal Navy at Plymouth. The four — Ged Duffy, Alan Rice, Gerry Brown and Ian Jolliffe — are men of peace, but there was nothing peaceful about the way they launched their lightning strike to take the battle home.

The long-time leaders were Needham Enterprises Limited and, with Devonport the only team left on the course who could catch them, they were entitled to believe



that they had at least one foot on the plane that will take the national finalists to La Manga, in Spain, next month. They could not have been more wrong. Devonport scoring 80 Stableford points to win by one.

This year the rules for this regional final series have been changed so that the four-player team splits into two two-halls, one pairing starting at the 10th. It builds tension, forces each half of the team to concentrate totally on their game and also means that, very often, teams have no idea of their combined score until the computer has done its work.

That is what happened on this

day: the victorious quartet had no idea that they had won until their names were read out. "We thought we might have done pretty well, but when the third and second teams were announced we thought we were out of it," Duffy, the captain, said. "Now we can't stop smiling."

There were good holes for each of the team members. Duffy had net birdies on the 1st and 16th holes. Jolliffe chipped to six inches for a net birdie on the 10th. Brown pitched up to 12 inches for another net birdie on the 1st. It was a triumph, as so many regional final victories are, of teamwork and the occasional lucky break.

RESULTS: 80: Devonport Management Ltd 78: Needham Enterprises Ltd 78: St John's Healthcare Group Plc 78: MeesPierson Corporate Consultants Ltd (St John's on course) 78: Drake Tooling & Abrasives Ltd 78: Hugh James Solicitors; Sun Electric UK Ltd; Devonport South Pumps; Chemical Corporation (UK) Ltd; Norel Opelec; Devonport Ltd; The St James Partnership; The Wooden Spoon Society (Barnstaple); British Airways Maintenance; Cardiff; Kase Ltd 78: Celtic Vacuum; Celtic Pool; Celtic Ltd; Celtic 88: British Steel Plc (Ghaston Works); McEwan Wallace 88: TNT Express Worldwide; 87: NHS Wales; Lincoln 86: Glyn Rowett Insurance; Walford; Cammell Metallurgy; Cousins Plc; Boyd & Lloyd Office Supplies Ltd 58: NSG Services Group Plc.

SNOOKER

McManus hits back after bitter defeat

By PHIL YATES

ONLY ten days have elapsed since Alan McManus suffered arguably his most acute disappointment in snooker when he lost to Nigel Bond from a seemingly impregnable position in the final of the Regal Scottish Masters. Yesterday the Scot began the process of healing his bruised ego at the Grand Prix in Bournemouth.

McManus rallied from 2-0 down to defeat Stuart Pinner 5-2 for a place in the last 32, but then said that he is still recovering from the psychological hangover of losing 9-8 against Bond in Motherwell after leading 6-6 and by 61 points in the fifteenth frame.

"What happened against Nigel is just about behind me now, but for a while afterwards I was walking around like a zombie," McManus said. "It was a bit of a nightmare because everyone knew I should have won, but now it's all behind me. What's the point in dwelling on something like that?"

Mark Williams and Euan Henderson, the finalists here last year, experienced contrasting fortunes. Williams began the defence of his title with a 5-2 victory over Michael Judge, but Henderson lost 5-2 to Tony Drago.

Williams, whose refreshingly aggressive approach also carried him to success in the British Open last season, lost the first frame on the black. If there was any sign of panic from Williams it was undetectable as he grew in confidence with each passing frame. He will now meet Matthew Stevens, a fellow Welshman. He beat Stephen Hendry in the first round of this event last year and his 5-1 victory over Steve James yesterday included a 137 total clearance in the opening frame.

Earlier, unpredictability had triumphed over reliability when Drago, erratic one moment, for the next, got the better of Henderson. Tactically Drago was inferior, but Henderson could not reproduce the break-building consistency that had underscored the highlight of his career last year.

Alain Robidoux, the world No 9, became the first member of the top 16 to be eliminated. He lost 5-1 to Paul Davies, but Steve Davis fought back from 3-1 down to beat Peter Lines 5-3.

CRICKET

Stephenson joins list of departing captains

By SIMON WILDE

JOHN STEPHENSON became the second county captain in the space of two days to lose his job when he resigned yesterday after two years in command at Hampshire. Twenty-four hours earlier, Northamptonshire announced that Robert Bailey had been removed after two seasons in charge.

Stephenson's departure is even less of a surprise than that of Bailey. He showed a reluctance to consult and Hampshire's results have been even more dismal than Northamptonshire's. The distressing aspect to Stephenson's experience is that he left Essex, and sacrificed a lucrative benefit in the process, specifically because he wanted to lead a county side.

Handicapped by an uninspired bowling attack, which had failed to come to terms with life after Malcolm Marshall, now the county coach, Stephenson's hopes of tangible success were short-lived. With injuries also playing their part, he got through more championship overs last summer than anyone else in the side, and his tally of 37 wickets was not bettered.

He must hope that, under another's leadership, he now rediscovers his form with the bat.

The club hopes to announce a successor in the next few weeks, and among the early favourites will be Robin Smith, Stephenson's stand-in, and Adrian Aymes, the wicketkeeper. Also to be resolved is the identity of next year's overseas player, with Paul Reiffel, the Australian, among a short list of bowlers.

Last month, Derbyshire handed the leadership to Dominic Cork, and with Sussex seeking a successor to Peter Moores, four of the bottom five teams in this year's championship have no signalled changes of captain for 1998. More upheavals may be in the offing, with Michael Watkins's position at Lancashire looking among the most precarious.

Mark Taylor, the Australia captain, dropped from the one-day international side to play an Academy XI later this month, responded by hitting 116 not out as New South Wales scored 290 for three on the first day of the Sheffield Shield match against Queensland in Brisbane.

DRAW

Group One: United States, England, Argentina, Japan, Group Two: Australia, Sweden, France, Taiwan, Group Three: South Africa, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Group Four: Zimbabwe, New Zealand, South Korea, Spain.

Winners of each group qualify for semi-finals on Sunday: group one v group two; group three v group four.

than a contrivance for a sponsor with lots of money to stage an event at the home of golf. This event is arguably the most complicated in golf, one in which most of the competitors do not know what is happening half the time, never mind the spectators.

There are four groups with four countries in each group. The seedings predict that the United States and England, Australia and Sweden, South Africa and Scotland and Zimbabwe and New Zealand will be the leading teams in their respective groups, but bearing in mind that in recent years Scotland have lost to Paraguay and India as well as winning the event in 1995, then the unpredictable nature of the tournament becomes obvious.

In some years any confusion as to precisely what is going on at any

FOR THE RECORD

BOWLS	
PRESTON BUILD HALL: Rupa Care Homes Open Championship: Peter G. Robinson (Scot) vs R. Newman (Eng) 7-2; 7-2; 7-2. Second round: H. G. Scott vs N. Booth (Ire) 7-1, 4-7; 7-2; R. Care (Scot) vs N. Booth (Ire) 7-1, 4-7; 7-2.	
BASEBALL	
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Florida 7 Atlanta 4 (Florida win series 4-2).	
CRICKET	
SHEFFIELD SHIELD (first day): Brisbane: New South Wales 280-3 (M. A. Taylor 116 not out, M. G. Steven 104 not out) v Queensland: Adelaide: Tasmania 284-6 v South Australia.	

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- C. SUTTON COLDFIELD: Jarvis Penns Hall Hotel & Country Club. 9th Nov. 2.00pm.
- D. EDINBURGH: Jarvis Ellersly House Hotel. 10th Jan. 2.00pm.
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MOTOR RALLYING

SAN REMO RALLY: Leading final positions: 1. C. McPhee (GB) Subaru Impreza WRX; 2. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 3. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 4. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 5. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 6. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 7. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 8. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 9. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX; 10. P. Latta (Ir) Subaru Impreza WRX.

LYONS: Men's tournament: First round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Second round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Third round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Fourth round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Fifth round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Sixth round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Seventh round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Eighth round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Ninth round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4. Tenth round: J. Jones (Scot) vs A. Connelley (Ire) 6-4, 6-4; 6-4; 6-4.

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An audience in the grip of homicidal mania

If you turn on your television at random intervals during the course of an evening, the chances are that you will see (a) a murder; (b) someone planning a murder; (c) someone solving a murder; (d) someone trying to stop someone else from solving a murder; or (e) someone being prosecuted for a murder. ITV's two-hour thriller *Into The Blue* (ITV) crammed in all five.

But the big murder mystery, as far as viewers are concerned, is how do schedulers manage to find room for so many murder-related programmes? Newton's first law of physics states that you can neither create nor destroy airtime (and before you all write in, I know that that wasn't really Newton's first law of physics: it was, in fact, his fourth). To put it in layman's terms, this means that since there is a maximum of 24 hours of television that can be broadcast on any channel on any day — and

since 17 of those are taken up with shows featuring either Carol Vorderman or Carol Smillie — we should have a high chance of avoiding seeing a murder when we switch on. But we haven't.

An even bigger mystery for viewers is how murder came to be regarded by television executives as the sort of thing we ache to watch whenever possible. If television is supposed to reflect or excite our interests, experiences and imaginations, then murder would rank very low in the things most of us find mysterious. If you compiled a table of things viewers found mysterious, it would show: Murder: maybe 1 per cent. Missing socks: 12 per cent. Carol Smillie: 24 per cent. Why exactly Eton fancies William Hague: 63 per cent.

The reason for this is that murder just doesn't feature very much in most of our lives. This is why it can be surprising to see how

much it features in everybody else's — at least if they live inside a television set. We were barely past the credits of *Into The Blue* and already we had racked up two dead bodies and a near-miss. Even John Thaw seemed surprised — and he's used to stiffs turning up like Tube trains in the rush hour (not on the Circle Line, of course).

This was one of those thrillers that lays out all the clues and red herrings for the inspection right at the start of the show. It is the murder-mystery equivalent of the television cook, who sets out his ingredients before combining them into something we can marvel at while we slurp our pot noodles (this is the other big television mystery: that cookery shows are flourishing at a time when we have become so lazily dependent on shove-it-in-the-microwave food, that shoppers would even pay extra for ready-washed

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

tomatoes. Yes, Mr Novelli, we will set aside our chicken bones to make stock — just as soon as Waitrose starts inserting bones into its frozen chicken nuggets.)

One girl's corpse turned up in Cambridge, another in Dorset, with possibly a third on the Greek island of Rhodes. Once you had reassured yourself that Thaw wasn't going to lead us into the Greek equivalent of his *Year In*

Provence — with Stavros-style caricatures selling him doner kebabs as they strummed their bazookis — and you just let yourself go, it was all engaging enough. It was pitched at the level of a beach holiday page-turner — only without the bother of rubbing Amore Solaire on your tummy.

Thaw, played by Harry Barnett, who used to own a garage until he went bankrupt and moved to Rhodes — where he worked as caretaker at a villa owned by his friend, a multimillionaire former cabinet minister. Because Barnett was arrested for the murder of the girl who had just vanished in Rhodes, he had a strong incentive to smuggle himself back to London and unravel the woman's mysterious disappearance and its link to those corpses. Thaw threw himself into the detective work so diligently that he seemed to metamorphose over the two hours from a Cockney former garage owner into

Inspector Morse, as if Morse was now his natural state of existence — like those stress-reducing rubber balls that always return to their original shape, however fiercely you mangle them.

Of course, murder wasn't something that millions of Europeans expected to feature large in their lives either — until Hitler came along. Even after he had his mark, Germans assumed that mass death would be something that would be inconvenient for others rather than themselves. In the final episode of *The Nazis* (BBC2), Laurence Rees wondered why the Germans had carried on fighting long after the Italians — realising which way the war was going — had ditched Mussolini in 1943. The Germans carried on, partly because they were convinced they were superior beings, which made it difficult to believe that the war

would go against them; partly because the Germans never found a way of getting rid of their Führer. In the last 15 months of the war at least 350,000 Germans died in Allied bombing raids. But right up to the last minute, Goebbels was urging the six million-strong German home guard "never to surrender at the sight of the enemy" because they were the last bastion against the Bolshevik horde.

But they didn't always listen. Rees tracked down survivors in the east German town of Demmin who recalled that when Soviet troops arrived on April 30, 1945 — the last day of Hitler's life, as it turned out — 900 Germans decided to commit suicide.

The underlying message of Rees's quietly brilliant series has been that as surreal as the Nazi murder machine might seem, all this *did* happen. And if it happened once, it could happen again. At any minute.

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (71697)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (71698)
- 9.05am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (381187)
- 9.30am Style Challenge (2776121)
- 9.55am Killy (7161406)
- 10.35am Change That (815098)
- 11.00am News (7) and weather (760524)
- 11.05am The Really Useful Show (7) (7638790)
- 11.30am Room for Improvement Denise Waterman takes a tour around an unusual home (7604061)
- 12.00pm News (7) regional news and weather (8214119)
- 12.05pm Call My Bluff (7751790)
- 12.35pm Going for a Song (543351)
- 1.00pm News (7) and weather (68806)
- 1.30pm Regional News (7) (73419239)
- 1.40pm The Weather Show (16589662)
- 1.45pm Neighbours (7) (71291351)
- 2.10pm Quincey (8157697)
- 3.00pm Through the Keyhole (7) (1413)
- 3.30pm Funnies (7) (9426158) 3.35pm Playdays (7) (843448) 3.55pm The Silver Brumby (8947264) 4.20pm Mr Wynn (7) (8541535) 4.35pm The (8076142) 5.00pm Newsnight (7) (2940381) 5.10pm Byker Grove (7) (9428806)
- 5.35pm Neighbours (7) (7163581)
- 6.00pm Six O'Clock News (7) and weather (535)
- 6.30pm Regional News (7) (887)
- 7.00pm Watchdog with Anne Robinson Consumer magazine (7) (6622)
- 7.30pm EastEnders The Square loses a family and Mary becomes disillusioned with London (7) (871)
- 8.00pm Animal Hospital Steve Knight accompanies the RSPCA inspectors as they call for assistance from the fire brigade to rescue a squirrel stranded up a church spire (7) (2142)
- 8.30pm Dad Had a Bad Day Vincent makes Alan realise he's not up with the latest fashion trends: can a trip to a gentlemen's outfitter solve the problem? (7) (4177)
- 9.00pm News (7) regional news and weather (3429)
- 9.30pm The Locksmith: Words and Deeds Roland captures the young thief he believes is responsible for the horrific attack on Carla. Drama, starring Warren Clarke, John Simm and Sarah-Jane Potts (7) (745871)
- 10.20pm Olive Anderson All Talk The guests are in Hisslop, the Two Fat Ladies and David Seaman (435142)
- 11.00pm Question Time George Robertson, the Secretary of State for Defence, and Sir Norman Fowler, the Shadow Environment Secretary, Anne Lesley of the Daily Mail, and Bridget Rowell, an economics and business consultant (7) (72055)
- 12.00pm Turner Vision (1994) Thriller, with Patsy Kensit, Robert Forster and Gary Day. A female cop's investigation into a series of grisly killings is made doubly difficult by her new partner's personal problems — and a murder committed a little too close to home. Directed by Clive Fleury (83017)
- 1.30am Weather (1740920)

VideoPlus and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each TV programme listing are VideoPlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder to record a programme at a particular time. In the VideoPlusCode, the programme you wish to record, VideoPlus (+), the PlusCode (+) and the VideoPlus numbers are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

BBC2

- 6.00am Science: The Chemistry of the Invisible (8806) 6.30am Healing the Whole (38177)
- 7.00pm See Hear Breakfast News (7) and signing (9525448)
- 7.15pm Teletubbies (7) (8765968) 7.40pm Smurfs Adventures (7) (4205535) 8.00pm Blue Peter (7) (7767535) 8.30pm Mouse and Mole (7) (2505887) 8.55pm Johnson and Friends (7) (7267025) 9.45pm Henry and the Handkerchiefs (7) (9454055)
- 9.10pm Numberline (3431700) 9.25pm Megamaths (7) (7903239) 9.45pm Come Outside (8534516) 10.00pm Teletubbies (29429) 10.30pm Storytime (6887429) 10.45pm Experiment (7454351) 11.05pm Space Ark (7803429) 11.15pm Zog Zag (8215535) 11.35pm English Night: Twelfth Night (3653351) 11.55pm Lifeschool (3568239) 12.20pm Showcase (7) (8917871) 12.30pm Working Lunch (37581) 1.00pm Barney (7) (5585326) 1.05pm Monty (7) (5582697) 1.20pm The Countryside Hour: Northern Ireland (7481239)
- 2.10pm Indoor Bowls: Bupa Open Last of the second round (8445429)
- 6.00pm Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (7) (704518)
- 6.45pm HR, Miss or Maybe (7) (383061)
- 7.00pm The Whitebread: The World's Greatest Ocean Race The first leg (7254)
- 7.30pm First Sight New series. The dangers of testifying against violent abusers (413) WALES: Ray Meers's World of Survival
- 8.00pm Ray Meers's World of Survival Ray meets the rainforest-dwelling Nuuu people on the island of Seram in Indonesia (7) (9564) WALES: Franco and Friends
- 8.30pm Top Gear The 1997 London Motor Show (7) (2719)
- 9.00pm Third Rock from the Sun Tommy lives to regret asking Dick to direct the school play (7) (794582)
- 9.25pm Horizon: The Man Who Lost His Body Ian Watson, whose nervous system was virtually destroyed by a virus (7) (588087)
- 10.15pm 10x10 Diary of a Madman (7) (585993)
- 10.30pm Newsnight (7) (214351)
- 11.15pm Late Review (443581)
- 11.55pm Weather (885806)
- 12.05am Phil Silvers Show (7) (4255494)
- 12.30pm Learning Zone: The Making of Kate Adle (5391630) 12.35pm Environment (7) (6163344) 1.00pm The North Sea (37272)
- 1.30pm Noise Annoys (74291) 2.00pm Customer Care (93037) 4.00pm Teaching Film and Media (59475) 4.30pm Movieplus (58765) 5.00pm Teacher Training (21007) 5.30pm Teaching and Learning with IT (24543)



Virus victim Ian Watson (9.25pm)

HTV

- 6.00am GMTV (4839790)
- 9.25pm Supermarket Sweep (7) (3617056)
- 9.55pm Regional News (7) (8639015)
- 10.00pm The Time, The Place (43055)
- 10.30pm This Morning (7) (7749997)
- 12.20pm Regional News (8911697)
- 12.30pm News (7) and weather (5436448)
- 12.55pm Shortland Street (5348239) 1.25pm Home and Away (7) (7670378) 1.50pm Remote Control Caring (7) (7101784) 2.20pm Vanessa's Keep Falling for Married Men (7) (74497158)
- 2.50pm The Natural Health Show Last in series (9264803)
- 3.20pm News (7) and weather (4825887)
- 3.25pm Regional News (4824158)
- 3.30pm Potomac Park (8948719) 3.40pm Wizard (9424790) 3.50pm Kipper (9420974) 4.00pm The Adventures of Dawdle (8202239) 4.15pm Jurnani (6195516) 4.40pm Animal Ark (7) (7543608)
- 5.10pm A Country Practice (3810719)
- 5.40pm News (7) and weather (119887)
- 6.00pm Home and Away (7) (880784)
- 6.25pm Regional Weather (862993)
- 6.30pm Regional News (7) (555)



Steve and Kim celebrate (7.00pm)

- 7.00pm Emmerdale Pollard gets into a pickle with Longman, Alex displays his wilder side; Kim and Steve's engagement party is a great success but last cars and dangerous living spell tragedy for Linda (7) (6055)
- 8.00pm The Bill: A Bad Lot The police are helpless when a 12-year-old boy runs amok on a local estate (7) (7210)
- 8.30pm Clive James on TV The Inimitable Antipodan takes a wry look at television presenters (9245)
- 9.00pm The Uninvited Guest denounces Blake as a terrorist on live television, forcing him to run. Last in series (7) (2239)
- 10.00pm News at Ten (7) and weather (37682)
- 10.30pm Regional News and weather (474429)
- 10.40pm WALES: The Farret (495784)
- 10.45pm Western Lights (33) (7) (495784)
- 11.15pm WALES: Celtic Fists (7) (543784)
- 11.15pm Limited Edition: The History of Plasticine (7) (543784)
- 11.45pm Swift Justice: Out on a Limb (60500)
- 11.50pm WALES: Swift Justice: Stones (432654)
- 12.35pm The LADS (7) (320591)
- 1.10pm Funny Business (5303475)
- 1.40pm Ed's Night Party (3075663)
- 2.05pm Planet Rock Profiles: REM (1367104)
- 2.35pm Late and Loud (7) (867582)
- 3.30pm The Good Sex Guide Late (7) (6985123)
- 4.25pm Sound Bites (9717165)
- 4.35pm The Time, The Place (7) (56070659)
- 5.00pm Garden Calendar (7) (90253)
- 5.30pm News (28369)

SATELLITE AND CABLE

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see Vision, published on Saturday

SKY 1

- 6.00am Morning Glory (762100) 8.00pm News and Kathie Lee (4198) 10.00pm Another World (5518) 11.00pm Days of Our Lives (9292) 12.00pm The 1997-98 NFL Football Season (89595) 2.00pm Sally Jessy Raphael (7100) 3.00pm Jerry Jones (89222) 4.00pm Oprah Winfrey (7429) 5.00pm Star Trek: Next Generation (6171) 6.00pm Live 5 Show (6887) 6.30pm Married... with Children (4239) 7.00pm The Simpsons (7808) 7.30pm Mr. T (5251) 8.00pm Suddenly Susan (1546) 8.30pm The Nanny (5051) 9.00pm Seinfeld (91413) 9.30pm Mad About You (7717) 10.00pm Chicago Hope (5072) 11.00pm Star Trek: Next Generation (9249) 12.00pm Late Show (54479) 1.00am Live 5 Show (152623)

SKY NEWS

Worldwide news coverage, with bulletins on the hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week

SKY MOVIES

- 6.00pm Friends of Asiel (1981) (4232987) 7.45pm The Guru (1989) (7493998) 8.00pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 8.30pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 8.55pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 9.15pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 9.40pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 10.00pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 10.25pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 10.50pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 11.15pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 11.40pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 12.05pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 12.30pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 12.55pm The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 1.20am The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 1.45am The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 2.10am The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 2.35am The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 3.00am The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 3.25am The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 3.50am The Bourne Identity (1988) (7493998) 4.15am The Bourne Identity (1988) 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GOLF 45

Storm gathers over St Andrews for Dunhill Cup

SPORT

THURSDAY OCTOBER 16 1997

RUGBY UNION 42

England take first step on steep learning curve



£4 million offer for England player

Villa launch surprise bid for Gascoigne

By Matt Dickinson

PAUL GASCOIGNE'S rehabilitation as a leading light of the English game appears to be gathering pace after an audacious move by Aston Villa to sign the controversial midfielder player. The FA Cup Premier club is believed to have made initial contact at chairman level with Rangers and, after receiving no rebuttal, are understood to have followed up that approach with a bid of £4 million.

While both clubs appear willing and able to agree a deal, the chances of it being finalised will be heavily dependent on the whims of a player who has never been accused of being predictable. Only last weekend, after the 0-0 draw against Italy in Rome that clinched England's place in the World Cup finals next summer, Gascoigne talked earnestly about his contentment at Rangers and his close relationship with Walter Smith, the manager.

Gascoigne's impressive performance against Italy appears to have convinced Brian

Little, the Villa manager, to make his move for the 30-year-old. Villa's stuttering start to the season has left them far short of being credible title challengers.

Signing Gascoigne would be a considerable gamble, but Little has never been afraid of taking risks. He bought Stan Collymore from Liverpool for £7 million last summer, despite the striker's notoriously fragile temperament, and prides himself on his ability to handle difficult characters.

In Gascoigne's defence, his previous two displays at international level have gone some way to confirming the claims of Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, that he has abandoned the recklessness that seemed to be driving him to self-destruction. Hoddle talked of a quieter, more composed character around the England camp, and Gascoigne's performances on the field have certainly reflected a newfound maturity. His injury record is also much improved and Hoddle has no doubt that the former Tottenham

Hotspur player will be instrumental in his campaign in France next summer.

Gascoigne signed a three-year contract with Rangers in the summer and has not expressed any desire to leave. "On Monday, all my thoughts will be with Rangers again," he said in the aftermath of England's World Cup qualification. "I have had good times and bad times, but the good ones are now."

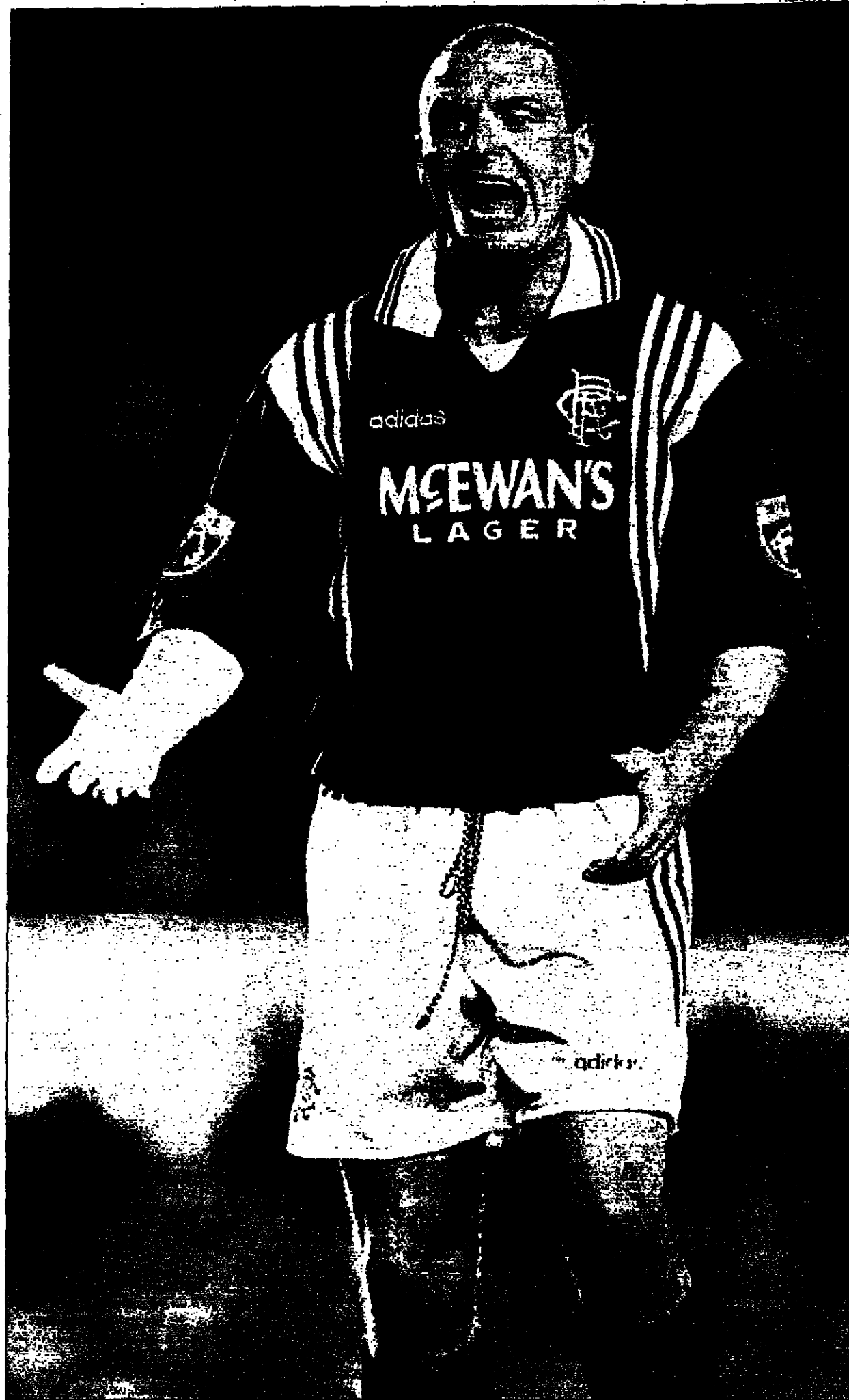
He has also forged a close bond with Smith, who has helped him through domestic traumas, including allegations of wife-beating and drinking binges. Gascoigne said: "Walter Smith asked me if I liked appearing in the papers all the time. When I said no, he asked me why I did it then. That made me stop and look at myself."

Rangers, however, appear willing to consider cashing in on him now. Despite winning nine league titles in succession, Smith has been under pressure after another early exit from European competition and he needs to bring in money if he is to fund the changes that are needed to mount a genuine challenge on the continent.

Doug Ellis, the Villa chairman, is believed to have made contact with his Ivor counterpart, David Murray, concerning the move for Gascoigne. It is not the first time that he has tried to lure the player to Villa Park — Villa were among a number of English clubs who tried to sign Gascoigne when he moved from Lazio.

There were suggestions that Tottenham, who paid a British record fee of £2 million to Newcastle United for him in 1988, were about to make a move for him earlier this week. A move to Villa would be the latest in a series of expensive transfers. After a protracted deal in 1992, Gascoigne moved to Lazio for £5.5 million and returned to Britain with Rangers for £4.3 million in July 1995.

Crawe's howler, page 44



Gascoigne's new maturity may have encouraged Villa to make their bid for the controversial midfielder player

Scotland accept French test

By Kevin McCarron

BY SECURING a place at the 1998 World Cup finals, Scotland seem to have acquired a seat at the top table. They have agreed to play a match on November 12 and the invitation ought to have been edged in silver and written in aristocratic script, since it came from the hosts of the tournament next year. Scotland are to meet France in St Etienne.

Craig Brown's side may be basking in their status, for they have also risen in the rankings of Fifa, the world governing body. An ascent from No 29, at the end of 1996, to No 25 may not be deemed meteoric, but the direction is enough to please Scots. In any case, the arid calculations of the statisticians do not determine value in sport.

France may have been more impressed by Scotland's achievement in qualifying for the World Cup finals at the expense of Sweden, who had finished third in the tournament in 1994. Aimé Jacquet, the coach of France, had provisionally arranged a friendly game on November 12 with Croatia, but their attention is now absorbed by a World Cup play-off, over two legs, against Ukraine.

Numerous nations, including Poland, were considered as replacements, but Jacquet favoured Scotland. Nonetheless, some critics will accuse Brown of a piece of social climbing that has seen him leave a few principles behind. At the weekend, Brown claimed that there would be no more international for his team until a meeting with Denmark at Brixen in March.

He argued that clubs, with their heavy schedules, should not have further demands placed on their players. Brown, who has been vetting possible accommodation in France for the finals, will be reminded of those remarks when he returns home today and, in Glasgow in particular, he will encounter some aggrieved figures.

Celtic and Rangers were already scheduled to face one another on November 8 and 19 in the Bell's Scottish League premier division. Now, half a dozen of their players could be embroiled in the fixture with France that has been interposed between those two games. Brown will be tactful in his use of Old Firm players, but there is still bound to be irritation.

Robson chases striker

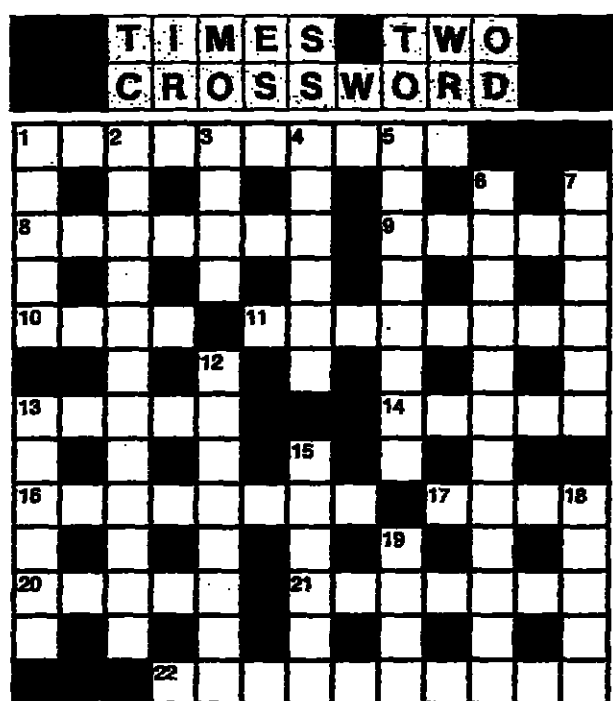
MIDDLESBROUGH believe they have found a replacement for Fabrizio Ravanelli (David Maddock writes). The Teesside club has made a firm inquiry for Viorel Moldovan, the Romania international. Viv Anderson, the assistant manager, and Gordon McQueen, the coach, watched the centre forward give an impressive display in the World Cup qualifying match against Ireland in Dublin last Saturday.

Grasshopper Zurich, the forward's club, confirmed the approach yesterday and suggested that Middlesbrough were willing to pay £1.5 mil-

lion for the player. "We are prepared to open negotiations," a club spokesman said.

Moldovan has scored nine goals in 15 internationals for his country and led the scoring in group eight with seven goals as Romania dropped just two points to qualify comfortably for the World Cup finals.

The 25-year old striker has also attracted attention from Everton, but Middlesbrough, who sold Ravanelli to Mar- seilles for £5.3 million earlier this season, are favourites. Bryan Robson, the manager, has confirmed that he is searching for a striker.



No 1226

ACROSS

- 1 In prison (6,4)
- 8 In summary (3,4)
- 9 Motif (5)
- 10 Simple (4)
- 11 Hissed consonant (8)
- 13 Lead (discussion); univ. post (5)
- 14 Sotto voce remark (5)
- 16 Bared; banned from flying (8)
- 17 Feeble; walk awkwardly (4)
- 20 A spy (5)
- 21 Have a share, portion (7)
- 22 Deteriorate, go back (10)

DOWN

- 1 William —, visionary poet (5)
- 2 Rather drunk (4-4)
- 3 Illuminated-sign element (4)
- 4 Needle; quivers with a bare one (Hawlett) (6)
- 5 Sir Terence —, Winslow Boy playwright (8)
- 6 Reintegrate into society (12)
- 7 Insect; pounding tool (6)
- 12 A Dark Lady (8)
- 13 French brandy (6)
- 15 Museum official; hopeful finder? (6)
- 18 Urge; a crowd (5)
- 19 Boast; card game (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1225

ACROSS: 3 Pica 8 Annual 9 Puerile 10 Knitter 11 Referee 12 Punish 14 Scold 15 Codify 17 Odious 20 Lapse 21 Ascent 24 Assault 25 Possess 26 Eat

DOWN: 1 Rank 2 Ensign 3 Plot 4 Apart 5 Terraced 6 Edify 7 Dethrone 12 Fecund 13 Soothe up 16 Depose 18 Obese 19 Caste 22 Copt 23 Coed

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Mosley courts grand prix controversy

By Michael Calvin

THE SAGA of Jacques Villeneuve's challenge for the Formula One world championship took a further twist last night when Max Mosley, the most powerful man in motor sport, apologised to Frank Williams for appearing to threaten Villeneuve's presence in the decisive final race of the season.

Mosley, the president of the FIA, motor sport's governing body, was alarmed to discover that some unguarded re-

marks seemed to compromise the committee that is scheduled to hear Villeneuve's appeal against disqualification from the Japanese Grand Prix in Paris next Tuesday.

His suggestion that an appeal would be unwelcome, because it carried the inherent risk of the Canadian driver being banned from the European Grand Prix in Jerez on October 26, was, he insisted, taken out of context. He telephoned Williams yesterday afternoon

to counter the impression that he was interfering in the disciplinary process.

"I was merely explaining that the FIA court of appeal is completely independent and it could institute any punishment it sees fit," he said.

Williams made no immediate comment, but the likely outcome remains the confiscation of the two points Villeneuve won at Suzuka. He will enter the Jerez race one point behind Michael Schumacher.



Villeneuve: challenge

Code of conduct for youth cricket

Public schools have moved to stamp out unseemly behaviour, Ivo Tennant says.

ALL the leading independent schools in Britain are to receive recommendations for a code of conduct on and off the cricket field. The intention is to suppress sledging and to prevent dissent over umpiring decisions and intrusive noise among fielders, after the row during the summer between Marlborough and Radley that led to a cessation of fixtures between them.

This coincides with wider moves emanating from the meeting of the sports sub-committee of Headsmasters and Headmistresses Conference Schools (HMC) at Brighton earlier this month. The paper containing the proposals has been drawn up by David Walsh, its cricket representative and a housemaster at Tonbridge, who is particularly concerned about the increasingly intrusive and intimidatory levels of noise in schoolboy cricket.

Walsh has been chairman of HMC Schools Cricket Committee since 1982. After playing for Oxford University from 1966 to 1969, he ran the game at Tonbridge from 1973

to 1986, coaching, among others, Christopher Cowdrey and Richard Ellison, and he helped draft a code of conduct for all sports at Brighton. His recommendations will go to 230 headmasters and thence to their cricket masters. "They stem only in part from the well publicised row in the summer," he said. "There is a fine line, especially for schoolboys, between encouraging your own side and allowing those comments to become offensive to others. I believe cricket masters should act to restrain noise, stamping firmly on anything intimidatory or unacceptable loud."

"I have included three particularly important points. Foul or abusive language on or off the field is unacceptable. So is intimidation, aggressive behaviour and deliberate distraction of opponents by words or actions, and dissent at umpiring decisions."

"Any instances of these should be very firmly dealt

with. Another source of concern to us is slow over rates, which can be a source of real friction. "Perhaps we all need to remember that we should be instilling in the young the highest standards of sportsmanship. Winning is not everything in school sport and it is a good thing for boys — and coaches and parents sometimes — to learn how to lose graciously. Above all, school sports should be fun so that boys want to continue playing afterwards," Walsh said.

James Wesson, master in charge of cricket at Radley, said he welcomed the code. "I am completely behind it... The one good thing to come out of our infamous match with Marlborough is that it has highlighted that standards are still important," he said.

Walsh is also the HMC representative on the England

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